

THE FACES OF THE OTHER

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THE FACES OF THE OTHER
Religious Rivalry and Ethnic Encounters
in the Later Roman World

Edited by

Maijastina Kahlos



BREPOLS

The faces of the other : religious rivalry and ethnic encounters in the later Roman world. – (Cursor mundi ; v. 10)

1. Rome – Ethnic relations. 2. Ethnic attitudes – Rome – History. 3. Cultural pluralism – Rome – History. 4. Religious pluralism – Rome – History. 5. Religion and religious literature – Rome – History. 6. Roman provinces – Social conditions. 7. Roman provinces – Religion. 8. Rome – History – Empire, 30 B.C.–476 A.D.

I. Series II. Kahlos, Maijastina.

937'.06-dc23

ISBN-13: 9782503539997

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D/2011/0095/139

ISBN: 978-2-503-53999-7

Printed on acid-free paper

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This volume of articles is a result of the interdisciplinary collaboration between scholars from the universities of Helsinki, Oulu, Turku, Aarhus, and Tel Aviv.

My research group's work, *The Faces of the Other: Otherness in the Greco-Roman World*, was generously funded by the Academy of Finland, and my work by the Academy of Finland and the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies (University of Helsinki). The articles of the Finnish contributors have been painstakingly revised by Margot Stout Whiting, Marlena Whiting, and Robert Whiting. Any remaining language errors are our own, due to later additions.

I wish to thank all the writers for their patient cooperation and valuable contributions, as well as Brepols Publishers for accepting this volume for publication and the anonymous reviewer from the *Cursor Mundi* series for useful guidance. In addition, special thanks are due to Marja-Leena Hänninen and Päivi Kuosmanen for their precious support and helpful advice.

This book is dedicated to the others.

Maijastina Kahlos
Helsinki, 5 March 2012

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt</i> , ed. by Hildegard Temporini and Wolfgang Haase (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1972–)
<i>CPh</i>	<i>Classical Philology</i>
CSEL	Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum Latinorum (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1866–)
<i>ILS</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae selectae</i> , ed. by Hermann Dessau (Berlin: Weidmann, 1892–1916)
<i>JECS</i>	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
PG	Patrologia Graeca, ed. by J.-P. Migne and others (Paris, 1857–66)
<i>RAC</i>	<i>Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum</i> , ed. by Franz Josef Dölger and others (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1950–)
<i>SHA</i>	<i>Scriptores Historiae Augustae</i> , vols I–II, ed. by Ernest Hohl (Leipzig: Teubner, 1971)

INTRODUCTION

Maijastina Kahlos

Ce qui peut s'énoncer ainsi: le phenomena qu'est l'apparition
d'Autrui est aussi *visage*
ou encore ainsi (pour montrer cette entrée, à tout instant nouvelle
dans l'immanence et l'historicité du phénomène):
l'épiphanie du visage est *visitation*.

[This can be stated in this way: the phenomenon which is
the apparition of the Other is also a *face*.
Again, to show this entry at every moment
into the immanence and historicity of the phenomenon,
we can say: the epiphany of a face is a *visit*.]

Emmanuel Levinas¹

Each community has its others. In order to comprehend and do justice to each representation of the other, it must be analysed in its own historical context. The aim of *The Faces of the Other* is to examine the cultural premises and manners in which groups and communities in the later Roman Empire construed their others within their own historical, social, and ideological framework.

The Faces of the Other discusses the conceptions and depictions of and attitudes towards otherness in the Roman Empire from the first until the fifth century CE. These others may have been perceived as ethnic others, as the Celts, Germanic

¹ Emmanuel Levinas, 'La Trace de l'Autre', *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie*, 25 (1963), 605–23 (p. 613); the English translation here is modified from Emmanuel Levinas, 'The Trace of the Other' (trans. by A. Lingis), in *Deconstruction in Context: Literature and Philosophy*, ed. by Mark C. Taylor (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 351 (where one sentence is omitted). The italics are Levinas's own.

peoples, or the Huns were to the Greeks and Romans.² Or they could be regarded as religious others such as Christians were to polytheists and vice versa, or different cults to the mainstream Romans, or different Christian sects to each other. The articles collected in this volume investigate the encounters and relations between different groups and communities in later antiquity, by exploring the varied ways in which different groups were portrayed.

Within the time span from the first until the fifth century, it is possible to detect changes as well as immutability in the perceptions of religious and ethnic groups in the course of five centuries. Images and stereotypes can be long-lasting, and therefore it is justified to make observations concerning the long-term perspective. One of the most enduring rhetorical commonplaces is the manner in which religious rivals such as 'pagans' and 'heretics' are depicted, for example, by marginalizing and even demonizing them. Another long-lasting topos is the manner in which the other peoples are characterized using the term 'barbarian'.³

Creating the Other and Defining the Self

Who is the other? The articles of *The Faces of the Other* explore otherness as a discursive construct and as a relational category rather than as an absolute ontological entity. This means that otherness is a concept anchored in time and in place, depending on the position of the perceiver. Scholars speak of the deictic nature of otherness in relation to the observer. Someone is the other only in relation to someone else. In the words of Jonathan Z. Smith, 'otherness is not a descriptive category, an artifact of the perception of difference or commonality. Nor is it the result of the determination of biological descent or affinity. It is a political and linguistic project, a matter of rhetoric and judgment.'⁴

² The term 'ethnic group' is understood here as a social collectivity that is neither static nor monolithic and is often subject to processes of assimilation with, or differentiation from, other groups. For discussion on ethnicity, see Jonathan M. Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 9–10.

³ The reader is asked to add imaginary quotation marks around words such as 'pagans', 'heretics', and 'barbarians'.

⁴ Bedrich Loewenstein, 'Wir und die anderen', in *Mit Fremden leben: Eine Kulturgeschichte von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. by Alexander Demandt (Munich: Beck, 1995), pp. 9–23 (p. 11), and Jonathan Z. Smith, 'What a Difference a Difference Makes', in *To see ourselves as others see us: Christians, Jews, 'Others' in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Jacob Neusner and Ernest S. Frerichs (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985), pp. 3–48 (p. 46). For discussion of otherness, see Jonathan Z. Smith,

Making differences and distinguishing ourselves from the other is an essential part of human thought and behaviour, for both individuals and groups. Difference is essential for making meaning; something can be defined in terms of what it is not. The image of the other expresses the sense of self. In other words, the other is fundamental to the construction of the self. The self and the other are mutually dependent and complementary in a ceaseless interplay with one another.⁵

Accordingly, otherness provides a means or a setting through which a group or community can mark its boundaries and test its limits. Consequently, depictions of religious and ethnic others provide modern scholars with a perspective for comprehending processes of identity building in Graeco-Roman antiquity. Therefore, in the articles in this book, 'identities' are understood as discursive social constructs that are formed and re-formed through on-going cultural negotiation. Scholars tend to outline identity building as a continuous fluctuation in which identities are shaped and fixed, checked and probed.⁶

Depictions of the other can be seen to serve the building of communities and of clarifying boundaries. To the other are often ascribed the qualities that the shapers of the image would prefer not to see in themselves. The clarification of boundaries by redefining the self and the other becomes particularly important in

'Differential Equations on Constructing the Other', a chapter in Smith's *Relating Religion: Essays in the Study of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), pp. 230–50 (p. 231), and Eduard Iricinschi and Holger M. Zellentin, 'Making Selves and Marking Others: Identity and Late Antique Heresiologies', in *Heresy and Identity in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Eduard Iricinschi and Holger M. Zellentin (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), pp. 1–27 (p. 12).

⁵ For the theoretical discussion, see Stuart Hall, 'The Spectacle of the "Other"', in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed. by Stuart Hall (London: Sage, 1997; repr. 2002), pp. 223–90 (pp. 234–38); William Scott Green, 'Otherness Within: Towards a Theory of Difference in Rabbinic Judaism', in *To see ourselves as others see us*, ed. by Neusner and Frerichs, pp. 49–69 (pp. 49–50); Judith Lieu, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 269; R. Shusterman, 'Understanding the Self's Others', in *Cultural Otherness and Beyond*, ed. by C. Gupta and D. P. Chattopadhyaya (Leiden: Brill, 1998), pp. 107–14 (pp. 107–12); Ithamar Gruenwald, 'The Other Self: Introductory Notes', in *Concepts of the Other in Near Eastern Religions*, ed. by Ilai Athon, Ithamar Gruenwald, and Itamar Singer, *Israel Oriental Studies*, 14 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), pp. 7–16 (pp. 9–10); and Maijastina Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue: Christian and Pagan Cultures, c. 360–430* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 55–57.

⁶ For useful discussions on the use of identity in modern scholarship and on the criticism of its use in premodern texts, see Iricinschi and Zellentin, 'Making Selves', pp. 2, 11–12 n. 40, and Lieu, *Christian Identity*, pp. 11–17. See also Green, 'Otherness Within', p. 50, and Klostergaard Petersen's article 'Othering in Paul' in this volume.

times of significant social and religious changes, crises, and upheavals. The articles of this volume also discuss how transitions and crises influence the depictions of the other and correspondingly the construction of identities.

The creation of the other is always an issue of hierarchies and power relations. The process of differentiation is very rarely a comparison between persons, groups, or cultures regarded as equal, but instead a ranking of a superior and an inferior. Scholars of identity and otherness speak of *othering* and *othering discourses*, referring to the representation of someone or some group (the other) as alien, abnormal, weaker, or inferior in regard to the observer (the self).⁷ Furthermore, the othering pattern of thinking does not recognize similarities or common features between the other and the self. All in all, othering is a sign of subordination or segregation.

The Depictions of the Other

Needless to say, when examining the Greek and Roman perceptions and depictions of different groups of people, it is largely irrelevant whether these depictions or images are true or false. Instead, what is more crucial is to comprehend the process of image formation — the reasons and mechanisms behind the image. Consequently, the purpose of our articles is not to search for some absolute or original essence of the other or the self from the sources but rather to analyse the perpetual transformation of ideas and conceptions.

Research on depictions and attitudes has employed a wide range of terms such as images, stereotypes, opinions, and prejudices. The term ‘theory of the other’ has also been used to refer to what we in this volume call stereotypes, depictions, or perceptions of the other. The historical research of images, also called *imagology*, speaks of collective images.⁸ An image is understood as a cognitive structure of an

⁷ Othering is defined as ‘the perception or representation of a person or group of people as fundamentally alien from another, frequently more powerful, group’ by *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, <<http://dictionary.oed.com/>>. Hall, ‘The Spectacle of the “Other”’, pp. 258–59, and Smith, ‘What a Difference’, p. 5. See also Klostergaard Petersen’s article ‘Othering in Paul’ in this volume for the dimension of power in the construction of otherness.

⁸ For the use of the term ‘stereotype’, see, e.g., *Stereotyp, Identität und Geschichte: Die Funktion von Stereotypen in gesellschaftlichen Diskursen*, ed. by Hans Henning Hahn (Frankfurt: Lang, 2002). For the terms ‘theory of otherness’ and ‘theory of the other’, see Smith, ‘What a Difference’, p. 46, and Green, ‘Otherness Within’, pp. 49–69. For the historical research on images, see Olavi K. Fält, ‘Introduction’, in *Looking at the Other: Historical Study of Images in Theory and Practise*, ed. by Kari Alenius, Olavi K. Fält, and Seija Jalagin (Oulu: Oulu University Press, 2002), pp. 7–12. In

object. It is a reflection of reality and it could be compared to a map in a person's mind, portraying reality but not being real in itself. Nonetheless, images become 'real' in the sense that they influence human decisions and actions. The image of the other reveals more of the shapers of the image than of the object portrayed, and therefore the attention is focused on the group, community, or culture that constructs the image of the other.

As was stated above, images and stereotypes often are stable and long-lasting. This permanence is due to the fact that image formation begins already in childhood and people tend to acknowledge the information that supports existing conceptions and, correspondingly, they reject information that opposes these conceptions. Despite this paradigm, images may also change. Either abrupt dramatic occurrences or repeated experiences may force a person or a group to re-evaluate the earlier conceptions and shape new images.

Identity and the Other in Classical and Early Christian Studies

With regard to the question of otherness, different disciplines have developed various approaches and theoretical frameworks.⁹ In classical and early Christian studies, self-perception and the depictions of other religions and peoples have been the subject of scrutiny even before the theoretical framework of identity and otherness became a trend.¹⁰ The study of identities in Graeco-Roman antiquity has

the historical study of images, images are considered more permanent than opinions or attitudes and more extensive than stereotypes. Stereotypes are regarded as parts of an image.

⁹ Just to mention a few scholarly schools in which otherness has been energetically discussed: philosophy, feminist theory, linguistics, psychoanalysis, social sciences, social psychology, anthropology, literary theory, and postcolonial studies. For otherness in postcolonial studies, see, e.g., Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994; repr. 2000), pp. 66–84.

¹⁰ E.g. A. N. Sherwin-White, *Racial Prejudice in Imperial Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967); Arnaldo Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom: The Limits of Hellenization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975); J. P. V. D. Balsdon, *Romans and Aliens* (London: Duckworth, 1979); François Hartog, *Le Miroir d'Hérodote: essai sur la représentation de l'autre* (Paris: Gallimard, 1980); Marie-Françoise Baslez, *L'Étranger dans la Grèce antique* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1984); the articles on the perceptions of barbarians published in *L'Image du barbare en Grèce et à Rome*, special issue, *Ktema*, 9 (1984); Lellia Cracco Ruggini, 'Gli antichi e il diverso', in *L'intolleranza: uguali e diversi nella storia*, ed. by C. Bori (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1986), pp. 13–49; Lellia Cracco Ruggini, 'Intolerance: Equal and Less Equal in the Roman World', *CPh*, 82 (1987), 187–205; and Robert Browning, 'Greeks and Others from Antiquity to the Renaissance', a chapter in Browning's *History, Language and Literacy in the Byzantine World* (Northampton: Variorum, 1989), no. II, pp. 1–26.

gradually become more popular in recent decades.¹¹ Surveys on ethnic and religious identities are inseparably linked with the discussion on otherness, especially in Judith Lieu's *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World* (2004).¹²

A number of monographs and collections of articles have been dedicated to the ancient conceptions of some religious and ethnic groups, for instance, *'To see ourselves as others see us': Christians, Jews, 'Others' in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Jacob Neusner and Ernest S. Frerichs (1985), Alain Chauvot, *Opinions romaines face aux barbares au IV^e siècle ap. J.-C.* (1998), and Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (2004).¹³ Furthermore, research on tolerance and intolerance

¹¹ To mention but a few, Jonathan M. Hall, *Hellenicity between Ethnicity and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); *Cultural Identity in the Roman Empire*, ed. by Ray Laurence and Joanne Berry (London: Routledge, 1998); *Confrontation in Late Antiquity: Imperial Presentation and Regional Adaptation*, ed. by Linda Jones Hall (Cambridge: Orchard Academic, 2003). For the research on identities in classical and especially in late antique studies, see Richard Miles, 'Introduction: Constructing Identities in Late Antiquity', in *Constructing Identities in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Richard Miles (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 1–15 (pp. 5–6); and Tessa Rajak, 'Talking at Trypho: Christian Apologetic as Anti-Judaism in Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*', in *Apologetics in the Roman Empire*, ed. by Mark Edwards, Martin Goodman, and Simon Price, in association with Christopher Rowland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 59–80 (p. 61).

¹² See also *The Jews among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire*, ed. by Judith Lieu, John North, and Tessa Rajak (London: Routledge, 1992). Other works on identity formation in antiquity: *Jewish and Christian Self-definition*, I: *The Shaping of Christianity in the Second and Third Centuries*, ed. by E. P. Sanders (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980); Edith Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989); Paul Cartledge, *The Greeks: A Portrait of Self and Others* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); *Being Greek under Rome: Cultural Identity, the Second Sophistic and the Development of Empire*, ed. by Simon Goldhill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); and Denise Kimber Buell, *Why This New Race: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

¹³ For other research on ancient depictions of religious and ethnic groups, see Louis H. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); Thomas S. Schmidt, *Plutarque et les Barbares: la rhétorique d'une image* (Leuven: Peeters, 1999); Maria Beatrice Bittarello, 'The Construction of Etruscan "Otherness" in Latin Literature', *Greece & Rome*, 56 (2009), 211–33; *Identität und Alterität in der frühbrömischen Tragödie*, ed. by Gesine Manuwald (Würzburg: Ergon, 2000); *Gegenwelten zu den Kulturen Griechenlands und Roms in der Antike*, ed. by Tonio Hölscher (Munich: Saur, 2000); Albrecht Dihle, *Die Griechen und die Fremden* (Munich: Beck, 1994); and some articles discussing Graeco-Roman antiquity in the collections *Mit Fremden leben: Eine Kulturgeschichte*

in Graeco-Roman antiquity is also connected with exploring the attitudes towards other groups and communities.¹⁴

In late antique studies in particular, identity building has been explored in important collections of articles such as *Constructing Identities in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Richard Miles (1999), *Ethnicity and Culture in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Stephen Mitchell and Geoffrey Greatrex (2000), *Shifting Frontiers in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Ralph W. Mathisen and Hagith S. Sivan (1996), and *Heresy and Identity in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Eduard Iricinschi and Holger M. Zellentin (2008).

The Articles of This Volume

The Faces of the Other has two sections: the articles of the first part focus on the depictions of religious groups, whereas the second part investigates the perceptions of and attitudes towards ethnic groups. The discussions on religious and ethnic otherness in these articles naturally overlap with each other, especially in Maijastina Kahlos's article 'Who Is a Good Roman?', in which religious inclination and the criteria for being a good Roman are intimately intertwined.

Anders Klostergaard Petersen's article 'Othering in Paul' also serves as a theoretical opening for our discussion on otherness in Graeco-Roman antiquity. After his theoretical reflections, he investigates the Apostle Paul's polemic against rival teachers in Corinth. While the main strand of scholarship has stressed the differences between Paul and his adversaries, Klostergaard Petersen detects that there was not that great a difference between Paul and his rivals; on the contrary, it was

von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart, ed. by Alexander Demandt (Munich: Beck, 1995); *Normen, Ausgrenzungen, Hybridisierung und 'Acts of Identity'*, ed. by Monika Fludernik and Hans-Joachim Gehrke (Würzburg: Ergon, 2004); *Le Barbare, l'étranger: images de l'autre*, ed. by Didier Nourisson and Yves Perrin, Travaux du CERHI, 2 (Saint-Étienne: Publications de l'Université de Saint-Étienne, 2005); and *Der imaginierte Nomade: Formel und Realitätsbezug bei antiken, mittelalterlichen und arabischen Autoren*, ed. by Alexander Weiss (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2007); as well as the articles on naming religious groups in the late Roman Empire, published in *Studies in Religion / Sciences Religieuses*, 33. 2 (2004).

¹⁴ *Tolerance and Intolerance in Early Judaism and Christianity*, ed. by Graham Stanton and Guy G. Stroumsa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); and *Concepts of the Other in Near Eastern Religions*, ed. by Athon, Gruenwald, and Singer; some articles discussing Graeco-Roman antiquity in *Libertad e intolerancia religiosa en el Imperio romano*, ed. by José Fernández Ubiña and Mar Marcos (Madrid: Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2007); and Maijastina Kahlos, *Forbearance and Compulsion: Rhetoric of Tolerance and Intolerance in Late Antiquity* (London: Duckworth, 2009).

the similarities that prompted Paul to engage in such vehement rhetoric against his opponents.

In 'Devotion and Deviance', Marika Rauhala explores the Roman views of the cult of Cybele from the arrival of the cult to Rome in 204 BCE until Christian Late Antiquity. Within the wide time span she is able to survey the developments of the image of the cult and its adherents. She demonstrates how the divided image of the republican and early imperial periods is exploited and further elaborated by both the defenders of the traditional cults and their rivals the Christians, each for their own purposes.

The clarification of blurred boundaries and ambiguities is also discussed by Päivi Vähäkangas in her article "That Ill-formed Little Fox". She discusses the polemic of Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons (d. c. 202), against the Valentinians. Irenaeus aimed at creating doctrinal boundaries within the Christian church, and the refutation of the rival group of the Valentinians was part of his project. Vähäkangas examines Irenaeus's polemic against the school of Valentinus in the context of theological rivalry and ancient invective rhetoric.

In 'Images of the Others in Tertullian', Anders-Christian Jacobsen investigates how Tertullian (c. 155–c. 220) viewed groups such as pagans, heretics, Jews, and women. Tertullian's often hostile rhetoric against these groups was a useful tool in developing and reinforcing Christian identity. Jacobsen shows how Tertullian used his argumentation to try to clarify blurred boundaries and mixed identities in Christian communities and to define Christian attitudes towards the society around them.

Markus Mertaniemi's article 'From *Superstitio* to *Religio Christiana*' explores how non-Christian writers segregated Christians from the late Roman society and even created an image of Christians as the enemy. He argues that one of the most significant reasons for the enemy image of Christians was the mutual rivalry between Christians and non-Christians among the elite. Mertaniemi also suggests that the earlier scholarly interpretations of the conflict between non-Christians and Christians in Late Antiquity should be revised.

For their part, fourth- and fifth-century Christian authors identified non-Christians as alien to late Roman society. This is what Maijastina Kahlos investigates in 'The Shadow of the Shadow'. She demonstrates how in the post-Constantinian Empire, the depictions of pagans reinforced and reaffirmed Christian identity in its growth into a majority. In her second article 'Who Is a Good Roman?', Kahlos discusses how being a good Roman was defined in terms of religion and how this idea had different implications in the third and fourth centuries respectively: in the third century Romanness was connected with participation in the sacrificial rituals,

whereas in the fourth century it was delineated as being the right kind of Christian. Others, 'pagans' and 'heretics', were excluded from Roman civilization.

In 'Migrating Motifs of Northern Barbarism', Antti Lampinen examines the narrative elements used in the Roman descriptions of the northern peoples from the late republic until Late Antiquity. He analyses the dynamic between the images of Gauls and Germans, observing widening of categories and the transfer of motifs from the depictions of Gauls to those of Germans. Many motifs and elements in these images are so general and conventional, belonging to a long-standing iconosphere in the literary tradition, that they could have been applied to any foreign group.

Benjamin Isaac's article 'Ammianus on Foreigners' explores fourth-century perceptions of various foreign peoples. Foreigners, especially nomads such as the Saracens, Isaurians, and Huns, are regularly portrayed using terms that made them appear less than fully human. According to Isaac, these recurring depictions of nomadic peoples as physically, morally, socially, religiously, and culturally inferior follow a clear pattern that can be interpreted as an early form of racism.

Marking Boundaries

Due to their different academic disciplines and their different source material, the contributors to this volume approach the issue of otherness in Graeco-Roman antiquity from varying viewpoints. Nonetheless, there are a number of mutual themes and problems.

There are different levels of otherness. Scholars speak of distant and proximate others. The distant other does not raise interest and cause discomfort as much as the proximate other, the neighbour. It is the proximate other that is painstakingly distinguished from 'us': this distinguishing is apparent in the Apostle Paul's rivalry with his adversaries (Klostergaard Petersen) and in Irenaeus's refutation of his opponents the Valentinians (Vähäkangas) as well as in the relations between non-Christians and Christians (Jacobsen, Mertaniemi, Kahlos). The proximate other posed a threat to one's own identity. The most vehement attacks and demarcations of boundaries arise in situations in which the other group came alarmingly close to one's own group and had too many similarities. For instance, the cult of Cybele was a challenge to Christian leaders who explained away the resemblances between the two cults as diabolic imitation (Rauhala).

Distant others tend to be less important and often become objects of idealization and/or exoticization (which is often a way of taming or purifying the menacing stranger). This was sometimes the case with the northern peoples on the edges of the Graeco-Roman world. We can speak of the idealization of the uncivilized

fringe in ancient literature (Lampinen). An image of uncorrupted barbarians far away from the Roman borders was a means for a writer to rebuke what he considered to be moral corruption in his own community: this tactic was used by Tacitus in *Germania* and later by Salvian of Marseille (Kahlos).¹⁵

Making differences and marking boundaries is a continuous process in our sources. For instance, Christian authors defined and reinforced their communities in relation to Jews and pagans (Kahlos). Tertullian was one such author who insisted on drawing clear boundaries between Christians and the surrounding pagan world and on abstaining from everything that for him represented idolatry, for example, Roman spectacles. Nonetheless, Tertullian also had to concede to the blurring of boundaries, for instance, in the education of Christians in pagan schools (Jacobsen). The boundaries of Romanness were marked and negotiated in religious terms which cast the charge of disloyalty upon Christians during the early empire and upon pagans during the late empire (Kahlos).

As is well known, 'we' are usually denoted with a word that means 'the people' because 'we' are regarded as the norm; correspondingly, the 'others' are given specific names because they are considered as different from this norm.¹⁶ Names function as boundary markers: those who give the names draw a boundary and segregate those who are named. The power of naming is apparent in the case of the long-lived terms 'pagans', 'heretics', and 'barbarians' (Kahlos, Vähäkangas, Lampinen). Many names have derogatory nuances; barbarian originally refers to those who mutter unintelligibly whereas *pagani* have a nuance of stupidity and boorishness.¹⁷

By applying labels such as 'idol-worshippers', 'Jews', 'Judaizers', 'heretics', and 'Manichaeans' to other Christian sects, Christian writers aimed at denying that

¹⁵ Cf. the image of 'noble savage' that from the early modern period onwards served as a critique of one's own western civilization; see Loewenstein, 'Wir und die anderen', pp. 18–19.

¹⁶ For the power of names and labels, see Theodore S. de Bruyn, 'Naming Religious Groups in the Late Roman Empire', *Studies in Religion / Sciences Religieuses*, 33 (2004), 147–56 (p. 149); Harold Remus, 'The End of "Paganism"?', *Studies in Religion / Sciences Religieuses*, 33 (2004), 191–208 (pp. 192–93); and Iricinschi and Zellentini, 'Making Selves', p. 2. See also Kahlos's article 'The Shadow of the Shadow' in this volume.

¹⁷ For the concept of 'barbarian', see, e.g., Edmond Lévy, 'Naissance du concept de barbare', *Ktema*, 9 (1984), 5–14; and Ilona Opelt and Wolfgang Speyer, 'Barbar', *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, 10 (1967), 251–90. Anthropologists refer to several tribes who call their neighbouring tribes with names meaning either stuttering, bellowing, or dumb people. For the concept of 'barbarian' in Late Antiquity, see Andrew Gillett, 'The Mirror of Jordanes: Concepts of the Barbarian, Then and Now', in *A Companion to Late Antiquity*, ed. by Philip Rousseau (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), pp. 392–408.

their opponents were Christians. Irenaeus, for instance, refused to call his rivals Christians but instead named them after some of their leading figures: thus, they are the followers of Valentinus, that is, Valentinians (Vähäkangas). We are familiar with a considerable assortment of names of Christian sects — Marcionites, Eunomians, Arians, Nestorians, Priscillianists, Donatists, and so forth — usually applied by outsiders rather than members of the group themselves.

Alienating the Other

Building binary oppositions such as true vs. false, light vs. darkness, pure vs. impure, and order vs. chaos appears in our sources as a form of self-expression. For instance, the Apostle Paul uses distinctions such as heavenly vs. earthly and godly vs. fleshly in his polemic against his rivals (Klostergaard Petersen). For Tertullian, his group represents the true Christianity while the others have only fabricated their Christianity (Jacobsen). Similarly, Irenaeus contrasts truth and error in his attack against the Valentinians (Vähäkangas). The boundaries of being Christian were clarified by construing dichotomies between ‘our’ Christian true God and ‘their’ pagan false deities (Kahlos).

Moral disqualification constituted an essential element in the ancient vituperative rhetoric against opponents. Others were attributed with values that were in sharp contrast with ‘our’ values, or even described as lacking values altogether.¹⁸ Thus, religious competitors were charged with either atheism or superstition (Rauhala, Jacobsen, Vähäkangas, Mertaniemi, Kahlos). Moreover, religious and ethnic groups were frequently labelled as dominated by women or somehow perverting or reversing the traditional roles of the sexes (Rauhala, Mertaniemi, Kahlos, Isaac). In the debates between Christians and pagans and in the controversies between Christian sects, each party had its share of defamation — on magic, incest, promiscuity, and orgies (Vähäkangas, Mertaniemi, Kahlos). Similarly, foreign peoples could be characterized as having substandard sexual morals (Lampinen, Isaac). Worst of all, a number of foreign peoples, especially nomads, were seen as lacking all morals, religion, and laws (Isaac). Othering discourse culminated in the insinuations and direct accusations of human sacrifices and cannibalism that were used as

¹⁸ An emblematic expression of this representational practice is the Roman historian Tacitus’s assertion (*Historiae*, 5. 4) that Jewish rites were divergent from those of other humans and that among the Jews everything that the Romans regarded as sacred was profane whereas what among the Romans was forbidden was permitted among them.

markers of barbarity in Graeco-Roman literature.¹⁹ In his ethnographic digressions, Ammianus depicts some peoples as drinking human blood, using human skins for clothes, or even being cannibals (Isaac). Human sacrifices or ritual murders were attributed to Christians, pagans, rivalling Christian sects, and also the Celts (Jacobsen, Mertaniemi, Kahlos, Lampinen).

The other could be marginalized and externalized from one's community. The Apostle Paul used the distinction of external vs. internal to marginalize his adversaries (Klostergaard Petersen). Groups existing and functioning within Roman society such as the adherents of Cybele, Christians, and, in their turn, pagans were represented as external, alien, and un-Roman (Rauhala, Mertaniemi, Kahlos). Similarly, the movement of the Bacaudae in the Gallic provinces in the third and fourth centuries was characterized as a barbarian enemy within the empire; thus, dissenting provincial groups could be externalized with the technique of 're-barbarization' (Lampinen). Furthermore, Christians were at times regarded even as the public enemies of Roman society, and from the late fourth century onwards pagans and heretics were represented as the enemies of Roman rule. Rivalling groups were associated with dirt and disease, and they were thought to bring pollution with them (Rauhala, Jacobsen, Mertaniemi, Kahlos).

The most extreme level of marginalization and externalization is to argue the other as belonging beyond the bounds of humanity.²⁰ In Roman society, the eunuch priests of Cybele, *galli*, were not considered to be humans in legal terms (Rauhala). Dehumanization is also an effective polemical tool against social and religious rivals, and this was used by Roman writers against Christians and later by Christian writers against pagans (Mertaniemi, Kahlos). It is interesting that Tertullian, who in his defence for Christianity appeals to humanity, the common ground between Christians and non-Christians, is ready to deny the humanity of his theological opponent, Marcion, whom he labels as more ill-behaved than wild beasts (Jacobsen). Animal imagery was indeed a standard implement of ancient invective rhetoric: adversaries are frequently called wolves, scorpions, snakes, vultures, and other dangerous animals. For instance, Irenaeus compares Valentinians to a little

¹⁹ For the use of human sacrifice as a marker of barbarity, see James B. Rives, 'Human Sacrifice among Pagans and Christians', *JRS*, 85 (1995), 65–85. The charges of cannibalism have been so frequent that scholars have in many instances cast doubt on whether it has really taken place; e.g. William Arens, *The Man-Eating Myth: Anthropology and Anthropophagy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980).

²⁰ Anthropologists report of typical ways of naming 'us' as humans and 'others' as something un-human or half-human, such as equating them with monkeys, crocodiles, eggs of fleas, or ghosts; cf. Rodney Needham, *Primordial Characters* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1978), p. 5.

fox with an ill-formed body. Dehumanization is also present in association with monsters, as Irenaeus's parallelization of the school of Valentinus with the Lernaean many-headed hydra shows (Vähäkangas).

In a similar vein, in the Greek and Roman literature, the Gauls and other northern peoples were often represented as beastly and monstrous 'latter-day Titans' (Lampinen). One late antique Christian writer, Prudentius, links barbarians, pagans, and animals (Kahlos). The most conspicuous and frequent animal comparisons come from the depictions of nomads. For instance, the Huns were compared with wolves that make their living by attacking and looting; they are also paralleled with centaurs, mythological creatures that were thought to be half-humans and half-animals (Isaac).

Demonization is the ultimate form of dehumanization of the other. Our ancient authors applied this against religious opponents, for instance, the Apostle Paul against rival teachers, Tertullian against his adversary Praxeas, and Christian writers against pagans. The deities of others were notoriously labelled as demons or unclean spirits (Klostergaard Petersen, Rauhala, Jacobsen, Kahlos).

Ridiculing and labelling were a means of intellectual disqualification. Rival groups and their beliefs were portrayed as preposterous, ignorant, weak, and childish (Rauhala, Vähäkangas, Mertaniemi, Kahlos). Roman writers often depicted other peoples as lacking rationality and mental qualities such as *fides* and *constantia* (Lampinen, Isaac). One of the most frequently used techniques of marginalizing and discrediting opponents in Graeco-Roman antiquity was feminization, that is, the association with women. In order to undermine the credibility of the rival religion, Greek and Roman authors labelled Christians as dominated by women (Mertaniemi) while in the later period, Christian writers aimed at discrediting other Christian groups as well as pagans with the label of female superstition.

Homogenizing the Other

One of the emblematic features of othering discourses is conspicuous in our sources: the depictions of other peoples and religious groups are built on the premise of their homogeneous and unchanging nature. An individual is portrayed as having all the collective characteristics of the group. Moreover, a writer attributed the group with some selected characteristics that are then thought to identify the members of the group.²¹ These simplified characteristics include the sense of

²¹ These representations are usually termed as 'stereotypes'; cf. de Bruyn, 'Naming Religious Groups', p. 150, who calls them 'prototypes'.

timelessness: for instance, the Roman historian Ammianus Marcellinus describes Gauls and other provincials as well as nomadic peoples as barbarians who never change or develop (Isaac). Nomads, especially the Huns, are made to represent the primordial phase of humanity (Isaac). The ancient theory of climatic or environmental determinism is connected to the idea of the permanent state of peoples. According to this theory, climate and geographical position determined the differences of the peoples in north and south, east and west (Lampinen, Isaac).

In the othering pattern of thought, there is a strong tendency to classify other groups and peoples under a single blanket term. Moreover, one does not usually recognize differences and nuances within otherness — the difference is drawn between one and the other. For instance, a great pleroma of Mediterranean religions and cults were grouped together under the label of paganism (Kahlos). Consequently, following this simplification, Christian writers used the cult of Cybele and particularly the eunuchs of Cybele as a weapon against the whole field of paganism (Rauhala). Furthermore, Christian writers drew upon this technique, lumping the rivalling Christian sects together under the single term of heretics. In their refutation of theological opponents, Christian writers grouped their Christian rivals together with pagans and Jews (Jacobsen, Vähäkangas, Kahlos).

Similarly, Greek and Roman writers often grouped the surrounding peoples and even in some cases a number of peoples within the empire under the collective concept of barbarians (Lampinen, Isaac). A number of Greek and Roman writers tended to identify recently encountered peoples such as the Goths and the Huns with the ethnic names of the past, for example, Scythians. Furthermore, late antique ethnic descriptions closely follow the conventions of earlier Graeco-Roman ethnographic accounts.

We can also perceive the circulation of *topoi* or motifs from one group to another. One of them is the charge of magic connected with the themes of human sacrifice. The charge of magic moves from the images of Jews to early Christians and from there it is transferred to the portrayals of pagans and heretics (Mertaniemi, Kahlos). Furthermore, in the depictions of Celts and Germans there are many migrating motifs, and we can speak of a perpetual iconosphere of northern barbarians (Lampinen).

Persistent Images

The historical research of images and perceptions of religious and ethnic groups is filled with hazards. In Graeco-Roman literature, we find several accounts of groups that are only known from these depictions, for instance, the Apostle Paul's

opponents (Klostergaard Petersen). In more fortunate cases, it is possible to compare the outside views with the self-image that groups convey to us in their own writings. It is evident that, for instance, Irenaeus's interpretation of his opponents is not enough to reconstruct Valentinianism. Luckily, in the case of the Valentinians and other religious groups usually classified as Gnostics, after the discovery of the Nag Hammadi library in 1945 we also have inside views of these groups (Vähäkangas). Even when the source material is abundant, the conceptions and images for the most part represent the views of the Graeco-Roman elites. It is almost impossible to get in touch with the views of the so-called ordinary people. At best only glimpses of the conceptions of ordinary people may be grasped through the literature written by the elite.

When reading these analyses in *The Faces of the Other*, the reader will probably have a sensation of déjà vu. Many images and stereotypes of religious and ethnic groups that we encounter in modern debates have their roots in Graeco-Roman antiquity. Not only do we find familiar traits of marginalization and dehumanization but also exoticization and idealization of the other. Accordingly, the conventions and techniques by which groups and communities in the later Roman Empire viewed and construed their others also provide a background for the better understanding of present-day controversies and conflicts.

Part I
Other Religions

OTHERING IN PAUL: A CASE STUDY OF II CORINTHIANS

Anders Klostergaard Petersen

Why this sudden unrest and confusion?
(How solemn their faces have become.)
Why are the streets and squares clearing quickly,
and all return to their homes, so deep in thought?
Because night is here but the barbarians have not come.
Some people arrived from the frontiers,
and they said that there are no longer any barbarians.
And now what shall become of us without any barbarians?
Those people were a kind of solution.

Constantinos Cavafy, from *Expecting the Barbarians*.¹

The Construal of Difference as a Cultural Prerequisite

If we imagine somebody observing the world for the first time without any previous knowledge or any cognitive presuppositions, the world would presumably appear as a greyish mass without contours or structures. It is by projecting difference onto the world that the world begins to emerge as a structured whole where one can orientate oneself according to the points that differentiate one place from the other. As in the Genesis narrative, where — like so many other mythical cosmogonies — the world does not come into being until chaos is structured by distinctions projected onto it: ‘And God separated (*vjbdl*) the light from the darkness’ (Genesis 1. 4).

The act of separation is crucial for structure to emerge. The act of separation also applies to the map. It is the differences between various points on the map that

¹ C. P. Cavafy, *The Complete Poems of C. P. Cavafy*, trans. by Rae Dalven, with an introduction by W. H. Auden (London: Harcourt Brace, 1961).

enable us to use it as a conceptual tool for manoeuvring around in the world. With oneness there could be no acknowledgement of difference. Recognition of difference, therefore, is a prerequisite for culture to come into existence.² To produce difference is basically to produce meaning — as we have learned from Saussure. Bipolar categorization seems to be the most basic form of cognition. Hence it is difference that allows us to perceive similarity, and resemblance that enables us to acknowledge difference. The two are reciprocally related. However, if it were not for some kind of perceived underlying resemblance, it would be altogether impossible to assess the ‘x’ with regard to which two entities in the first place have been categorized and subsequently distinguished from each other.³ It is the common ‘x’ which allows us to create ‘y’s, ‘z’s, etc. that in turn enable us to distinguish the entities perceived as belonging to ‘x’ from each other. This commonality, simultaneously, indicates the fragile nature on which the distinctions are based. The lines could have been drawn differently. Other ‘y’s and ‘z’s could have been chosen. Additionally, if both ‘a’ and ‘b’ belong to ‘x’ they must share some properties if in the first instance they are to be conceived of as belonging to the same entity. So, perhaps, ‘a’ and ‘b’ are not that different from each other as we are commonly inclined to think.⁴ From another perspective, they may turn out to be more akin than they would like to acknowledge themselves: both ‘x’, whether Romans or barbarians.

Needless to say, these introductory reflections have an important bearing on the manner whereby human beings construe identity, whether collective or individual. Just as there can be no light without the existence of darkness which makes the light appear as such by the sheer fact that it is perceived as differing from the dark, so there can be no self without the existence of other selves from which the first self differs. In other words, in order to posit something as a something it has to differ from some other ‘something’. Otherwise it could not be recognized as such. In this manner, difference and identity are closely related. The one cannot be perceived

² Cf. the catchy title of J. Z. Smith’s essay ‘What a Difference a Difference Makes’, in *To see ourselves as others see us: Christians, Jews, ‘Others’ in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Jacob Neusner and Ernest S. Frerichs (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985), pp. 3–48.

³ A. J. Greimas, ‘Difference’, in *Sémiotique: dictionnaire raisonné de la théorie du langage*, ed. by A. J. Greimas and Joseph Courtés (Paris: Hachette, 1979), p. 100.

⁴ Cf. J. F. Lyotard, *Discours, figure*, Collection d’esthétique, 7 (Paris: Klincksieck, 1971), p. 142: ‘Dans l’opposition, pour Saussure, il y a donc différence et rapport. La différence, écrit le commentateur, “en soi, est bien un caractère négatif: si *a* est différent de *b*, cela revient simplement à dire que *a* n’est pas *b*, quel que soit le degré de non-coïncidence; mais dès l’instant qu’un rapport existe par ailleurs entre *a* et *b*, ils sont membres d’un même système, et la différence devient opposition”.’

without the conception of the other. To be an 'I' necessarily implies a difference from a 'you'.

The same applies to all levels of groups whether they are as small as a school class or a local community or as great as nations or world religions. To be a group involves the awareness of other groups that differ from one's own group. It is by the construction of difference that a self-identity is created which simultaneously gains life from the definition of the opposing groups. Once again, it is the projection of difference onto a conceptual map that allows groups to come into being. Were it not for the existence of other religions, for instance, there could be no acknowledgement of Judaism as a religion. It is the conceptual *taxon* religion that enables us to posit a particular segment of cultural phenomena as being distinct from others, and within that category to differentiate between different manifestations of the selected segment of reality.

To what extent the existence of groups correlates to actual differences in the unstructured world from which they arose is impossible to say. We only know of them by means of the categorizations that have allowed them to come into being; that is, we know of them as cultural constructs. Like any other cultural entity, however, they are vulnerable to the dangers that persistently threaten to erode and eradicate culture.

It may well be that the categorizations — as we are increasingly coming to learn from cognitive studies — have strong cognitive underpinnings of a precultural nature, but my point is that we are only capable of acknowledging them insofar as they manifest themselves culturally. That, of course, does not exclude the possibility that when the categorizations have been culturally acknowledged, precultural cognitive processes contribute to the ongoing strengthening of the cultural awareness. Be that as it may, this point underlines the importance of categorization as intrinsic to identity construction. Ultimately, identity construction is a question of projecting conceptual distinctions onto the world and by different cultural strategies to reify these categorizations to an extent that they obtain such an aura of factuality — to invoke Clifford Geertz — that the categorizations appear not only uniquely realistic, but as the only given reality.⁵ In this manner, ontological dumpings of fragile cultural entities contribute to ascribing them the status of self-evident reality.

At the same time, however, this point highlights the fragile and malleable basis of identity building. The world could have looked differently if the *taxa* had been

⁵ Cf. Merlin Donald, *A Mind so Rare: The Evolution of Human Consciousness* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), p. 287: 'The patterns that emerge at the level of culture are not only real but dominate the cognitive universe that defines what "reality" is.'

posited in another way or if the boundaries had been drawn differently. To the extent that categories dissolve, identity constructions begin to crumble — as is so wonderfully captured in the poem by Constantinos Cavafy. When there are no more barbarians, it is difficult to maintain the status of being Roman. The construction of identity, like any other cultural construct, has cultural existence only to the extent that somebody is endorsing the categorization on which the identity is based. To the extent that somebody recognize himself or herself in the interpretation offered, that interpretation has cultural bearing; but interpretations are vulnerable and susceptible to the dangers that persistently threaten cultural constructions: semantic polyvalence and the risk of exposing oneself to lies.⁶

Othring and the Relationship to Social Reality

The importance of categorization for human conceptualization and manoeuvring in the world was already noted by William James when he claimed that ‘Every way of classifying a thing is but a way of handling it for some particular purpose’.⁷ Among one of the most central factors in the bipolar categorization of the world is the concept of the ‘other’. As already indicated, it is by means of constructing an ‘other’ — whether at the individual or at the group level — that identity is forged.⁸ In order to appear as a self or as a group, one has to contrast oneself with other selves or groups. As Ithamar Gruenwald has succinctly argued:

In relating to the Other, the Self usually operates in an either/or mode: the very otherness of the Other creates separation from the self, distancing and alienation. The distinctness of the Other is all too often maintained in holding it at arm’s length, in estrangement and alienation. Mostly, identification with the Other takes a negative form. It is often believed

⁶ In his groundbreaking work, Roy A. Rappaport emphasizes lie and alternative as the two vices which intrinsically threaten language, society, and culture, and against which they persistently have to protect themselves. See Roy A. Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*, Cambridge Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology, 110 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 321–23.

⁷ William James, *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy* (New York: Longman, 1898; repr. 1903), p. 70.

⁸ Cf. Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (New York: Macmillan, 1922; repr. New York: Free Press, 1965), p. 83: ‘Thus we gradually paint portraits of each other. For the opponent presents himself as the man who says, evil be thou my good. He is an annoyance who does not fit into the scheme of things. Nevertheless he interferes. And since the scheme is based in our minds on incontrovertible facts fortified by irresistible logic, some place has to be found for him in the scheme.’

that to cross the vast distances between Self and Other, that is, to find modes of positive identification, one has to make undesired concessions and to pay too high a price.⁹

In the same essay, Gruenwald emphasizes how there is a strong tendency to project the difference between the self and the other onto an axis of value that posits the self at the ameliorative pole and the other at the pejorative pole. It is this ascription of value to the difference between groups that underlies the traditional distinction between in-group and out-group in social identity theory (see below).

When texts engage in establishing clear-cut boundaries between in-group and out-group, it is urgent for the analyst to consider to what extent these distinctions correspond to social reality or not. Even if there are no longer any barbarians around to solidify the sense of Romanness, texts may continue to use time-honoured concepts for rhetorical purposes. Even though I have my doubts about the scope and more radical nature of the argument, Miriam Taylor has made a strong case to document that many early Christian texts of the second and third centuries — traditionally interpreted as being engaged in a fervent struggle with contemporary forms of Judaism — are, in fact, having recourse to a powerful, age-old symbol. Taylor argues that the anti-Judaism of these texts did not in their historical context mirror any direct social reality with purported Judaism of a non-Christian nature. On the contrary, the texts picture a struggle between Jews and Christians which belongs to the past, but can be rhetorically orchestrated by being relegated to the present in order to strengthen the self-understanding of Christians.¹⁰ At the same time, the accusation against certain forms of Christianity for being ‘too Jewish’ was a powerful weapon that could be used in particular contexts in order to extrapolate those versions of Christianity from the category:

It seems that the term to ‘judaize’ had no fixed meaning within the early church, but was used rather in a variety of circumstances. It might on occasion have been used against fellow Christians who were thought to be too attached to some aspect or other of the Jewish ritual or tradition (cf. Gaston 1986a:44; Gager 1983:18), but it also had a pure theoretical dimension, which served in the definition of theological issues and in the illustration of a peculiarly Christian way of life. In neither its practical nor its theological manifestations does it appear to have had any meaningful or substantial connection with Judaism itself.

⁹ Ithamar Gruenwald, ‘The Other Self: Introductory Notes’, in *Concepts of the Other in Near Eastern Religions*, ed. by Ilai Athon, Ithamar Gruenwald, and Itamar Singer, Israel Oriental Studies, 14 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), pp. 7–16 (p. 7).

¹⁰ See Miriam S. Taylor, *Anti-Judaism and Early Christian Identity*, Studia Post-Biblica, 46 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), p. 30: ‘The sparseness of the evidence for judaizing in the pre-Constantinian period has forced scholars to formulate their theories on the basis of the later evidence which is then read back and presumed to apply in the earlier period as well’; cf. p. 40.

There is absolutely no evidence to suggest that it was ever actively welcomed or encouraged by the people of the neighbouring synagogue.¹¹

Something similar is taking place in Paul's letter to the Romans where Paul can use vitriolic, standard rhetoric in a stereotype fashion to castigate Graeco-Roman culture as cognitively deficient and sexually depraved:

for though they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools; and they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling a mortal human being or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles. Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the degrading of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. For this reason God gave them up to degrading passions. Their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural, and in the same way also the men, giving up natural intercourse with women, were consumed with passion for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their own persons the due penalty for their error. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind and to things that should not be done. They were filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, craftiness, they are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, rebellious toward parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. They know God's decree, that those who practice such things deserve to die — yet they not only do them but even applaud others who practice them. (Romans 1. 21–32)¹²

It is obvious that we are facing a caricature of 'pagan' religiosity that portrays the symbolic or generalized 'other' in terms of those values that Paul despised.¹³ The symbols are the more powerful, however, since the vices emphasized were also despised by the elite segments of the Graeco-Roman culture to which Paul also (partially) belonged.¹⁴ In this manner, Paul turns a cluster of motifs signifying reproachful values of Graeco-Roman elite thinking against itself. It is gentiles and

¹¹ Taylor, *Anti-Judaism*, p. 40.

¹² Translations from the New Testament are taken from the Revised Standard Version (this is an American English version throughout, at least when it comes to the spelling) with some alterations.

¹³ For an overview of the whole repertoire of vitriolic rhetoric that was used by Graeco-Romans in antiquity to castigate other people and their religious mores, see Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), pp. 253–491.

¹⁴ See R. F. Hock, 'Paul and Greco-Roman Education', in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook*, ed. by J. P. Sampley (Harrisburg: Trinity, 2003), pp. 198–227 (p. 215).

not humanity in general that he condemns in Romans 1. 18–32.¹⁵ To the extent that gentiles are endorsing a world view different from Paul's Christ-believing one, they are embodying the very same vices which they too deem reproachful.

The two examples should make us cautious about drawing any direct inferences from powerful symbols being used to the social reality underlying these symbols. Obviously, this is a trite point, but it is nevertheless often forgotten by scholarship when engaging in reconstructing the social reality underlying various texts. All too often, the ideological map of the texts in which clear-cut boundaries exist between group and world, between in-group and out-group, is conflated with the actual social territory; but if all we have is a caricature of opponents or out-group, it is extremely difficult — verging on the impossible — to reconstruct the social territory on its own terms.¹⁶ We do not have any firm criteria for assessing the extent to which an interpretation has resonance among its intended audience or not. In a recent review of a book on Galatians and the imperial cult, Mark Nanos has put forward the argument that

to hope to be effective, the writer of the accusation has to calculate it to be believable, able to resonate and undermine trust in what the audience has ostensibly supposed about them. But whether this is accurate, in the sense of actually representative of their aims, even whether mirroring them to frame opposition rather than merely reflecting the discursive topics the writer invents to serve his own ends, is another matter. Moreover, do we know that it did resonate with the audience or only that Paul ostensibly supposed it would? If one wishes to judge intentions, we at least have some basis for judging Paul's self-interests, but hardly those whose influence he opposes.¹⁷

Even though scholars have exercised great care in exploring the possibilities for conducting mirror-reading of, for instance, the Pauline letters in order to reconstruct the opponents of Paul behind his rhetorical depictions of them,¹⁸ it appears

¹⁵ Cf. Stanley Kent Stowers, *A Re-Reading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), who persuasively argues that the passage 1. 18–2. 16 refers to gentiles only and not to humanity in general.

¹⁶ Some of the following argument overlaps with passages in my article 'Wisdom as Cognition: Creating the Others in the Book of Mysteries and 1 Cor 1–2', in *The Wisdom Texts from Qumran and the Development of the Sapiential Tradition*, ed. by C. Hempel, A. Lange, and H. Lichtenberger, *Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologiarum Lovanensium*, 159 (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), pp. 405–32.

¹⁷ Mark D. Nanos, 'Review of J. K. Hardin, *Galatians and the Imperial Cult: A Critical Analysis of the First-Century Social Context of Paul's Letters*', *Review of Biblical Literature*, 04/2009, <<http://www.bookreviews.org/subscribe.asp>> [accessed 26 May 2009].

¹⁸ See among others J. M. G. Barclay, 'Mirror-Reading a Polemical Letter: Galatians as a Test Case', *Journal for the Study of New Testament*, 31 (1987), 73–93, particularly pp. 74–82, and J. L.

to me a problematic endeavour. Despite the fact that the main contours of Paul's rivals may be detected on the basis of a careful analysis of his letters, we cannot move beyond the obvious fact that we have access to them only through an overtly ideological depiction, that is, Paul's far from neutral, polemical portrayal of his alleged rivals. How could one possibly claim to know the motives and intentions of Paul's alleged rivals when they are portrayed 'in hyperbolic Greco-Roman first-century polemic written not by themselves but by someone aiming to undermine their intentions'?¹⁹ Rather than despairing over our limited access to the actual social territory underlying Paul's letters, there is plenty of room for interpretations of the ideological maps through which Paul construes his world.

Additionally, there would have been no need to engage in establishing boundaries between in-group and out-group if these boundaries had been evident in the social reality outside the textual world. This leads me to an important point. Just as informative as the naming of the others is for the manner in which a given religion or culture understands the others, just as significant is the naming as a source for the manner in which the religion or culture in question understands itself. In fact, most labels adopted to express otherness — be they economic, generic, ethnic, religious, etc. — tell us far more about the people who use and deploy them than about the people they purport to describe. As a matter of fact, it is intrinsic to identity-forming that it is not carried out in isolation. The question of how we view ourselves cannot be disconnected from the question of how we view others and relate to them, and the equally important question of how others view and relate to us. These views are intrinsically related.

The different codes applied by a culture to describe the others are only plausible and powerful to the extent that they have a fair grounding in the self-understanding of the naming culture. If the others, as emphasized by Rodney Needham, are described as monkeys, crocodiles, or malign spirits,²⁰ the naming party presumably

Sumney, 'Studying Paul's Opponents: Advances and Challenges', in *Paul and his Opponents*, ed. by Stanley E. Porter, *Pauline Studies*, 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), pp. 7–58. For a sharp, but from my perspective entirely justified, critique of mirror-reading in the context of Galatians, see George Lyons, *Pauline Autobiography: Toward a New Understanding*, Society of Biblical Literature, Dissertation Series, 73 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), p. 96.

¹⁹ Nanos, 'Review of J. K. Hardin'.

²⁰ Rodney Needham, *Primordial Characters* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1978), p. 5: 'It is a frequent report from different parts of the world that tribes call themselves alone by the arrogant title "man", and that they refer to their neighboring peoples as monkeys or crocodiles or malign spirits.'

has a world view in which these taxa play a vital role. The same applies as we have already seen to Paul and the Christian texts of the second and third centuries discussed by Miriam Taylor. The symbols chosen by a particular culture in order to express otherness are not arbitrary. To establish the crucial difference by which disparity is construed, the applied symbols must have a foundation in the self-understanding of the naming community. Once again, this should make us cautious about drawing inferences as regards a purported underlying social reality. Needless to say, we cannot infer from the fact that monkeys are being used as a derogatory category of the others to the fact that the others are monkeys. The same applies *eo ipso* as we shall see in a moment to Paul. That Paul construes his opponents in II Corinthians as sophists should not lead us to think that they were in fact sophists. Nor can we be entirely sure that they conceived of themselves as being opponents of Paul. Anyhow, it is the ideas and sense of distinctiveness of the naming community that determine the choice of symbols. After all, it is a person or group of persons belonging to group *a* that tells other members of group *a* about group *b*. The plausibility and power of the symbol chosen depends on its resonance within the social-cultural foundation of the naming society. Terms like idol-worshippers, magicians, Jews, barbarians, etc. have linguistic power only to the extent that they cover a social domain which the members of the culture in question grasp as significant for their construction of reality. William Scott Green has pointed to this fact, which I have already discussed above:

A society does not simply discover its others, it fabricates them by selecting, isolating, and emphasizing an aspect of another people's life and making it symbolize their difference. To evoke the significant disparity of which otherness is composed, the symbol must correspond powerfully to the naming society's sense of its own distinctiveness.²¹

This contention points to another aspect in the construction of otherness. Otherness does not represent an absolute state of being but is a relative category exposed to change. What in one case may be judged as other, in another situation is alike and therefore not other.²² We are dealing with social-relational categories that continually change. Just as sameness changes so does otherness.

²¹ William Scott Green, 'Otherness Within: Towards a Theory of Difference in Rabbinic Judaism', in *To see ourselves as others see us*, ed. by Neusner and Frerichs, pp. 49–69 (p. 50).

²² Smith, 'What a Difference', p. 46.

Alterity as Intrinsic to Identity-Forging

William Scott Green has also underlined that the creation of others represents an exercise in caricature: ‘The neighboring peoples, after all, are not really crocodiles (any more than the ones who call them that are really “man”), but some trait of their collective life makes that label fitting and plausible to those who invent it.’²³ Green further elucidates the manner in which the creation of the others is rhetorically constructed. The construction involves a double move consisting of both an act of appropriation and a feat of exaggeration. The others do not construct themselves as others. They do not call themselves ‘magicians’, ‘barbarians’, or ‘idol-worshippers’, but they are conceived as such by the taxonomizing culture. Therefore, the taxonomic enterprise by which otherness is constructed implies both a double metonymy and a double act of distortion. First, in the process of being defined as other a part of the cultural entity is conflated with the entity in total. In this manner, an essentialization is taking place by which a part is confused with the whole. Second, and simultaneously, an aspect characterizing the taxonomizing community is identified with the taxonomizing unit as a whole. A part of the others may be ‘not-men’, and therefore, all the others are ‘not-men’. An aspect of the taxonomizers is ‘men’, and therefore, all the taxonomizers are ‘men’. The underlying logic means that each entity is construed in terms of the other.

In this manner, the creation of others is not only a matter of keeping the others — the idol-worshippers and the barbarians — at a safe distance. It is not only a matter of affirming one’s own position and drawing firm boundaries to exclude the others and to keep them at a distance. By projecting a troublesome aspect of oneself onto the others — the barbarian within — this aspect is externalized, enabling one to cope or live with it. Walter Lippmann has poignantly emphasized that ‘when a system of stereotypes is well fixed, our attention is called to those facts which support it, and diverted from those which contradict’.²⁴ In this sense, the creation of others is also a way of managing or even overcoming one’s own internal problems. Green underlines how the correspondence between us and the others

can reshape the naming society’s picture of itself, expose its points of vulnerability, and spark in it awareness of, or reflection about, the possibility or the reality of otherness within. The boastful proposition ‘we are men and they are crocodiles’ implies that ‘we were, or could have been, or might yet be crocodiles too’.²⁵

²³ Green, ‘Otherness Within’, p. 50.

²⁴ Lippmann, *Public Opinion*, p. 78.

²⁵ Green, ‘Otherness Within’, p. 50.

This is, of course, an important observation for the interpretation of religious texts aimed at strengthening the identity of the in-group. By applying a strategy of polarization the coherence of the internal world view is enhanced. And we may add to this that the affective dimension of using emotional language should not be underestimated. If certain words and concepts trigger disgust or repulsion, the conceptual categories are further strengthened by being embodied. Be that as it may, this observation leads to a final aspect of a theory of alterity that is of importance for the interpretation of religious texts.

As suggested above, otherness is a relative and not an absolute category, because difference is rarely a neutral class. Most often it is a matter in which one has a particular interest or something is at stake. In this manner, a dimension of power is intrinsically involved in the construction of otherness. Difference is a subject of interaction. For this reason the distant other is merely other, whereas the proximate other is the problematic other. Jonathan Z. Smith has underlined the importance of this aspect:

While the 'other' may be perceived as being either LIKE-US or NOT-LIKE-US, he is, in fact, most problematic when he is TOO-MUCH-LIKE-US, or when he claims to BE-US. It is here that the real urgency of a 'theory of the other' emerges. This urgency is called forth not by the requirement to place the 'other', but rather to situate ourselves. It is here to invoke the language of a theory of ritual, that we are not so much concerned with the drama of 'expulsion', but with the more mundane and persistent process of 'micro-adjustment'. This is not a matter of the 'far', but, pre-eminently, of the 'near'. The problem is not alterity, but similarity — at times even identity. A 'theory of the other' is but another way of phrasing a 'theory of the self'.²⁶

Smith's contention converges with a point made by Albert Baumgarten which he amusingly has called 'the rule of the Martian'.²⁷ By this rule he indicates that

the hostility is likely to be greatest between two groups between which a Martian would have most difficulty in distinguishing. In other words, contrary to the expectation that shared goals and overlapping identities might lead such groups to be well disposed toward each other, these circumstances frequently result in heightened mutual animosity.²⁸

The more the groups look alike, the greater is the need for the one group — or certain members of it — to distinguish itself from the resembling ones that by their similarity threaten to erase the boundaries between the groups. Group resemblance,

²⁶ Smith, 'What a Difference', p. 47.

²⁷ Albert I. Baumgarten, 'The Rule of the Martian as Applied to Qumran', in *Concepts of the Other in Near Eastern Religions*, ed. by Athon, Gruenwald, and Singer, pp. 121–42.

²⁸ Baumgarten, 'The Rule of the Martian', p. 121.

however, can be of different kinds. It may be groups that are located in the same geographic area. It may be groups that adhere to similar rituals or that share a particular ideological world outlook. The possibilities are *legio*, but the important point is that it is the proximate and not the distant other that causes problems pertaining to one's identity and self-understanding. At the same time, however, it is important to judge in each case what kind of proximity is involved.

Obviously, this point goes against the grain of thinking of the individual groups, which are adamant in their self-conviction that they are categorically different from the groups which resemble them the most. Jonathan Z. Smith's reference to the crustacean is a telling example: 'Probably a crab would be filled with a sense of personal outrage if it could hear us class it without ado or apology as a crustacean, and thus dispose of it. "I am no such thing", it would say: "I am *myself, myself* alone".'²⁹ Hence, we find in the Synoptic Gospels a persistent othering with regard to the Pharisees, despite the fact that this strand of Judaism was probably the one that resembled the Jesus-movement the most. This observation is important not only with regard to the interpretation of texts but also with regard to scholarship, as already suggested by the above reference to Smith. Traditionally, scholarship has been inclined to take the boundaries of the texts at face value, forgetting or overlooking the fact that boundaries have a cultural and not a natural character.

When texts engage in drawing boundaries and establishing watertight bulkheads to the surrounding world, it is generally because the boundaries that the text wants to enforce are far from evident in the social world actually surrounding the text. This is the feature famously referred to by Jonathan Z. Smith in his use of Korzybski's distinction between map and territory.³⁰ What we find in the texts are ideological maps of what the world ideally should look like, that is, in accordance with the world view of the author; but there would have been no need to engage in this endeavour had it not been for the discrepancy between actual social territory and the aspirations of the textual author. Hence, we should be very careful in our analyses not to conflate the two with each other.

²⁹ J. Z. Smith, 'Adde Parvum Parvo Magnus Acervus Erit', a chapter in Smith's *Map Is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions*, Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity (Leiden: Brill, 1978), pp. 240–64 (p. 243), with reference to William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Random House, 1929), p. 10.

³⁰ See the title of Smith, *Map Is Not Territory*.

Presuppositions for the Interpretation of II Corinthians

Number of Letters

On the basis of these predominantly theoretical reflections I shall now turn my attention to an examination of a concrete example of othering. Needless to say, constraints of space do not allow me to pursue the question in detail. What I present, therefore, is not an exhaustive study of II Corinthians. I merely focus on those aspects that particularly pertain to the construction of otherness in this Pauline letter. Other Pauline letters such as Galatians and Romans with their focus on questions pertaining to the understanding of the law may, perhaps, appear as more suitable candidates for a study of othering, but I have selected II Corinthians due to the role it attributes to cognition in its construction of otherness. Hence, my analysis will serve as a case study in which I use some of the theoretical observations for shedding light on the text, but at the same time I will illuminate the theoretical perspective by focusing on this particular text.

II Corinthians has since the 1830s been a favourite object for scholars who favour partition theories of the Pauline letters.³¹ Even though some scholars have maintained the unity of the letter, it is fair to say that the majority of scholars have argued for an understanding based on different partition theories. There is no denying that the letter bears some of the responsibility for this scholarly propensity. In II Corinthians 2. 3–4. 9 Paul refers to a previous letter written out of much affliction (*lupe*) and anguish of the heart and with many tears (cf. 7. 8–9. 12 which refers to the same letter). This information has led scholars to search in the letter for the ‘lost’ so-called Letter of Tears, which many — on the basis of its more caustic tone — have been tempted to identify with II Corinthians 10–13.³² Additionally, in I Corinthians 5. 9 Paul refers to a letter hardly identical with the present I Corinthians in which he has enjoined his addressees not to mingle with immoral persons. Some scholars have also been prompted to search for this

³¹ For an extensive study of the arguments pro and contra an understanding of the letter as divided into several letter fragments, see the two studies by Reimund Bieringer, ‘Teilungshypothesen zum 2. Korintherbrief: Ein Forschungsüberblick’ (pp. 67–105) and ‘Der 2. Korintherbrief als ursprüngliche Einheit. Ein Forschungsüberblick’ (pp. 107–30), both in *Studies on 2 Corinthians*, ed. by Jan Lambrecht and Reimund Bieringer, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovanensium, 112 (Leuven: University Press, 1994).

³² See the lucid overview in Ivar Vegge, *2 Corinthians — a Letter about Reconciliation*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, 2/239 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), pp. 12–18, of scholars identifying II Corinthians 10. 1–13. 10 with the Tearful Letter.

seemingly lost letter in the Corinthian letter corpus in general. Finally, abrupt changes in tone, theme, and textual passages within the letter have been used as a springboard for creating different models of partition theories.

In recent years, however, there has been a growing chorus of scholars voicing the view that the letter should be conceived of as a unity.³³ I shall not venture into this discussion, which would detract from the main objective of this essay. In order to understand the argument, however, I will briefly state my opinion on this controversial issue. I understand II Corinthians as a unity characterized by a succinct and thoroughly composed rhetorical argument. I do not find any basis for developing partition theories in the letter. The ostensible transitions in themes, tone, and motives of the letter can be explained by the rhetorical development of the argument. Hence, it is unnecessary to have recourse to claiming that the seeming ruptures or changes are due to the fact that they as letter fragments originate in different historical contexts. I understand I Corinthians as being identical with the Tearful Letter, and the case referred to in II Corinthians 2. 3–11 and 7. 8–13 as being that of I Corinthians 5. 1–5. Apart from the fact that a number of church fathers made the same identification between these textual passages,³⁴ several arguments pertaining to content can also be adduced in favour of understanding I Corinthians 5. 1–5 to be the same case echoed in the II Corinthians passages.³⁵ In

³³ One prominent early exponent of this view is Niels Hyldahl, 'Die Frage nach der literarischen Einheit des zweiten Korintherbriefes', *Zeitschrift für Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 64 (1973), 289–306. In recent years, other representatives of this view are Bärbel Bosenius, *Die Abwesenheit des Apostels als theologisches Programm: Der zweite Korintherbrief als Beispiel für die Brieflichkeit der paulinischen Theologie*, Texte und Arbeiten zum Neutestamentlichen Zeitalter, 11 (Tübingen: Francke, 1994); Troels Engberg-Pedersen, '2. Korintherbrevs indledningsspørgsmål', in *Tro og historie: Festskrift til Niels Hyldahl i anledning af 65 års fødselsdagen d. 30. december 1995*, ed. by Lone Fatum and Mogens Müller, Forum for Bibelsk Eksegese, 7 (Copenhagen: Tusculanum, 1996), pp. 69–88; Reimund Bieringer, 'Plädoyer für die Einheitlichkeit des 2. Korintherbriefes: Literarkritische und inhaltliche Argumente', in *Studies on 2 Corinthians*, ed. by Lambrecht and Bieringer, pp. 131–79; Vegge, *2 Corinthians*. Even though these scholars all argue for an understanding of the letter which presupposes its unity, they differ considerably with regard to the reconstruction of the events underlying the letter. Unlike Hyldahl, Bosenius, and Engberg-Pedersen, Bieringer and Vegge take the so-called interim visit (cf. II Corinthians 1. 23, 2. 1, 12. 14, 13. 1–2) for granted; see Bieringer, 'Plädoyer für die Einheitlichkeit', p. 132, and Vegge, *2 Corinthians*, pp. 85–91.

³⁴ See Victor Paul Furnish, *II Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible, 32A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984), p. 164.

³⁵ See Furnish, *II Corinthians*, pp. 164–66, who not only lists similarities but also differences between the two texts. The differences emphasized by Furnish are in my opinion not so overwhelming that it excludes an identification. By talking about identification, however, I do not mean to say that

line with the argument of Niels Hyldahl, Bärbel Bosenius, and Troels Engberg-Pedersen, I reject the idea of a so-called interim visit on Paul's part.³⁶ I think such a postulated visit causes more problems than it solves. In conclusion, I think that we know of three letters to the Corinthian community of which the first has been lost (the one referred to in I Corinthians 5. 9).

Unlike the situation underlying the background for I Corinthians, the situation in the Corinthian community has changed considerably at the time when Paul decides to write II Corinthians. I consider the problems of II Corinthians to be closely related to the reaction which the reception of I Corinthians gave rise to among members of the Corinthian community. Even though we do not hear about the distinction between strong and weak members of the community in II Corinthians, I think it is likely that the problems are predominantly caused by the strong members of the community. In addition to the problems brought about by what I understand to be the Corinthians' lack of action with regard to the sex sinner, that is, that the Corinthians, in fact, have refrained from excommunicating him despite the strong admonishment by Paul to do so (I Corinthians 5. 3–7), and thus have caused Paul great embarrassment,³⁷ problems have also occurred with regard to a

Paul is relating to the incident in exactly the same manner in the two letters. I think that there is a world of difference, which has to do with the fact that in II Corinthians Paul rhetorically presupposes that the Corinthians, in fact, have taken action by excommunicating this so-called sex sinner from the community. However, a good case can be made to show that Paul is discussing this solely from the perspective of wishful thinking. I believe that one of his problems at the time of composition of II Corinthians is 'to explain away' that the Corinthians have failed to take any action on the sex sinner. Even though I concur with the basic argument in Engberg-Pedersen, '2. Korintherbrev', pp. 74, 81–82, I part ways with him at this point, since he takes Paul's rhetoric at face value.

³⁶ It needs to be underscored that despite a high degree of agreement between these three scholars, they also diverge from each other at important points. Engberg-Pedersen, '2. Korintherbrev', p. 76, and Bosenius, *Die Abwesenheit*, pp. 12–13, for instance, believe 13. 1a to refer both to the time when Paul founded the community and to the time when he had plans to come to Corinth but did not appear. Niels Hyldahl, *Die paulinische Chronologie*, Acta Theologica Danica, 19 (Leiden: Brill, 1986), pp. 103–04, on the other hand, interprets it to mean 'This third time I am coming to you', implying that Paul — despite his previous promises to come to Corinth — this time truly intends to come to them.

³⁷ Due to constraints of space, I cannot unfold the argument in this essay; but I tend to think that scholars have been too inclined to take Paul's argument at face value, not realizing that, although Paul rhetorically presupposes that the Corinthians have taken action with regard to the sex sinner, this is not the case in reality. I understand the rather exaggerated rhetoric of II Corinthians 2. 1–11 and 7. 8–13 to be a token of Paul's desperation to 'explain away' the fact that the Corinthians did not do what Paul admonished them to do.

new front. In II Corinthians Paul is confronted with what he conceives to be dangerous opponents.

Identity of the Opponents

As already indicated in my theoretical reflections, I am sceptical towards the possibility of reconstructing the viewpoints of the opponents in any of Paul's letters. Even though it is not a weighty criticism, it is nevertheless conspicuous to see the diversity found throughout the history of scholarship of reconstructions of Paul's opponents in II Corinthians.³⁸ There are some points, however, which seem incontestable with regard to the identity of the purported opponents. They are clearly of an ethnic Jewish background (11. 22). They are Christ-believers (10. 7; 11. 13; 11. 23), and they have — subsequent to the situation which prompted Paul's composition of I Corinthians — entered the community (3. 1; 10. 12–15; 11. 4–5, 12–15; 12. 11).

In the history of scholarship, two trajectories of interpretation have been particularly influential. The one — originating with F. C. Baur — understands the opponents to be judaizers similar to the ones found in Galatians.³⁹ The other line of scholarship — originating with Bultmann — identifies the opponents with so-called Gnostics and claims that Paul's opponents are the same as he is fighting against in I Corinthians.⁴⁰ A third strand of scholarship — particularly connected with the name of Dieter Georgi — may be seen as a combination of the two previous ones.⁴¹ He understood the opponents of Paul to be 'Hellenistic Jewish-Christian' *theioi andres*.⁴² In this manner, Georgi was able to maintain the Jewish nature of the opponents, but rather than seeing them in connection with the Galatian controversy over the issue of law and circumcision, he combined it with an interpretation that was more cognate to the Gnostic interpretation. At the same

³⁸ For a lucid overview, see Reimund Bieringer, 'Die Gegner des Paulus im 2. Korintherbrief', in *Studies on 2 Corinthians*, ed. by Lambrecht and Bieringer, pp. 181–221.

³⁹ See Bieringer, 'Die Gegner', pp. 193–99.

⁴⁰ See Bieringer, 'Die Gegner', pp. 200–04.

⁴¹ See the discussion of this strand of scholarship in Bieringer, 'Die Gegner', pp. 204–08. Bieringer, however, does not make the point that this line of scholarship may be seen as a blending of the two previous ones.

⁴² Dieter Georgi, *Die Gegner des Paulus im 2. Korintherbrief: Studien zur religiösen Propaganda in der Spätantike*, Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament, 11 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1964).

time, Georgi was also keen to underline the novel nature of the controversies in comparison with I Corinthians. Hence, he did not conceive of them as ‘Gnostics’, as he held the opponents in I Corinthians to be, but as Jewish miracle-workers placing emphasis on the works of the spirit and resembling characters such as Apollonius of Tyana, Alexander of Abonuteichos, and Peregrinus Proteus.

As indicated by my use of inverted commas, I consider the time-honoured scholarly categories such as ‘gnostic’, *‘theios anēr’*, and the like used to discuss the nature of Paul’s opponents to be obsolete.⁴³ They are indicative of a scholarly paradigm that has not truly detached itself from the problems pertaining to the use of the Judaism-Hellenism dichotomy.⁴⁴ At the same time — and related to the first point of criticism — these categories do not comply with the standards for clear analytical definitions also with regard to the use of religio-historical concepts and categories.⁴⁵ Be that as it may, I think that the opponents are far closer to Paul’s position than has been acknowledged by traditional scholarship. I believe that the ‘opponents’ pose a threat to the status of Paul not by their difference from but by their similarity to Paul’s own position. It is the resemblances between the positions that (in Paul’s view) threaten to undermine his position within the Corinthian community as its true and only apostle (see below).

Purpose and Nature of II Corinthians

Unlike the situation at the time when Paul composed I Corinthians, new preachers have appeared in the Corinthian community who threaten Paul’s status. In Paul’s view, they are ‘stealing’ his community from him by arrogating to themselves something that clearly belongs to Paul, that is, the Corinthian community which he as

⁴³ See among other works my article “‘Gnostisk kristendom’ som kristendom”, in *Mellem venner og fjender: En folkebog om Judasevangeliet, tidlig kristendom og gnosis*, ed. by Anders Klostergaard Petersen, Jesper Hyldahl, and Einar Thomassen, Antikken og Kristendommen, 6 (Copenhagen: Anis, 2008), pp. 231–66 (pp. 240–45).

⁴⁴ For a clear departure from this paradigm, see the programmatic title of *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide*, ed. by Troels Engberg-Pedersen (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), and the essays included in the volume. See also my ‘Kristendom og hellenisme — en skæbnesvanger konstruktion’, *Religionsvidenskabeligt Tidsskrift*, 41 (2002), 41–75.

⁴⁵ I grant that categories and concepts taken from particular historical situations and extrapolated — at different levels and to different degrees dependent upon the concept or category in question — to constitute general categories and concepts within the study of religion are of an unmarked and impure nature. Their impure character notwithstanding, it is nevertheless incumbent upon us to define them in a manner that diminishes the degree of impurity as much as possible.

its founder 'owns' (cf. 10. 13–15). The other preachers have ostensibly attempted to oust Paul by asserting their superior stand in comparison with Paul (cf. 3. 1–7; 10. 7–18; 11. 4–6; 11. 12–12. 13; 12. 19–21). Their criticism of Paul has apparently gained some resonance among members of the Corinthian community. The shrill and heated tone of the rhetoric is a proof of the seriousness which Paul attributes to the situation. Hence, he sees himself forced to engage in an extensive self-defence pertaining to three central and partially interconnected issues.

The first one concerns Paul's defence of his apostleship. It includes several aspects that all have to do with Paul's relationship with the Corinthian community. In 1. 3–7 Paul anticipates the accusation of 1. 23–2. 11 and 7. 8–13 that the composition of I Corinthians has caused affliction and distress among the Corinthians. In 2. 1–11 he explains to his addressees that the affliction caused by I Corinthians would have been greater had he physically come to them. His decision to write them a letter, therefore, was in their own interest. In fact, the decision not to return to Corinth was taken in order to spare them (1. 23). At the same time, this section anticipates Paul's subsequent handling of an accusation made against him that due to his weak appearance he did not dare to confront the 'super apostles' (10. 1–6, 10–12; cf. 4. 7–12, 16–18; 6. 3–10; 12. 11–13). Unlike the 'intruding' apostles Paul is not in need of praise from the Corinthians since there is already a close relationship between him and them (3. 1–6). Therefore, he does not need letters of recommendation from the Corinthians, since the Corinthians are Paul's letter of recommendation (3. 1–3). In continuity with problems already witnessed in I Corinthians 9 and pertaining to the fact that Paul deliberately refrained from being economically supported by the Corinthian community,⁴⁶ he is being accused of exploiting the collection for his own purposes (8. 20–21). Finally, 10. 1–13. 10 is one extensive polemic against the 'false apostles' who have attempted to intrude on Paul's missionary field. At the same time, it serves as an apology for the apostleship of Paul with the aim in mind to re-establish the relationship between him and the Corinthians.

The second contested issue concerns Paul's travel plans. II Corinthians 1. 12–24 is a defence for both Paul's changed travel plans and his failure to come to Corinth despite his plans and promises to do so (cf. I Corinthians 4. 19 and 11. 34). The

⁴⁶ See the discussion in Dale B. Martin, *Slavery as Salvation: The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press), pp. 137–40, which persuasively documents how Paul's rejection of the Corinthians' financial support could be interpreted differently by different people belonging to Paul's 'own culture'. The variety of interpretations notwithstanding, it is difficult not to interpret Paul's act as a basic transgression of expectations pertaining to Paul's relationship with the Corinthian community.

seriousness of the matter is also evident from 1. 23–2. 4, in which Paul defends himself for sending the Corinthians I Corinthians rather than coming to Corinth in person. In this manner, I Corinthians replaces a personal visit which Paul could have made by travelling straight from Ephesus to Corinth (I Corinthians 16. 4–9; II Corinthians 2. 12–13).

The final matter of discord concerns the collection to Jerusalem. Paul uses the collection rhetorically as a symbolic token of the Corinthians' continuous support of his ministry.⁴⁷ At the same time, however, the plans for the collection can — as mentioned above — be turned against Paul himself. Although vaguely expressed it seems as if Paul has been accused of pilfering from the collection (8. 20–21) and thus avoiding financial support from the Corinthians. The collection may already be referred to in 1. 11, which has terminological overlaps with 9. 11 (cf. 4. 15). I consider the collection chapters 8–9 to be the rhetorical turning point of the letter. In 1–7 Paul has rhetorically attempted to move the Corinthians away from the 'intruding' apostles to a state of complete loyalty towards himself. At the end of chapter 7, Paul frankly declares that 'I rejoice because I have perfect confidence (*en panti tharrō*) in you' (7. 16). The token of this confidence is taken for granted in the two subsequent chapters, where Paul enjoins the Corinthians to express their loyalty in action, that is, by contributing abundantly to the collection (cf. 7. 13–16 which serves as a *captatio benevolentiae* which by means of reconciliatory and flattering speech shall pave the way for the Corinthians' reception of the enjoinder to bring the collection to completion). Based on this rhetorically presupposed loyalty of the Corinthians, Paul in the remaining four chapters proceeds to a direct confrontation with the rivalling apostles (10. 1–13. 10).

The fact that a majority of scholars has been inclined to see II Corinthians as being composed of several letter fragments has had the consequence that few have attempted to give an overall classification of the letter. With a growing number of scholars in recent years accepting the unity of the letter, however, rhetorical categorizations of II Corinthians have been on the increase. Fredrick Long has provided an important study in which he argues for seeing the letter as a propagandistic apology in the vein of apologetic *demegoriae*.⁴⁸ In a previous work, I

⁴⁷ For the importance of the collection within the rhetoric of II Corinthians, see my forthcoming article 'Forced Charity: A Study of Charity, Grace and Contractual Thinking in II Corinthians'.

⁴⁸ Fredrick J. Long, *Ancient Rhetoric and Paul's Apology: The Compositional Unity of 2 Corinthians*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series, 131 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 112–13. Cf. Johannes Schoon-Janssen, *Umstrittene 'Apologien' in den Paulusbriefen: Studien zur rhetorischen Situation des 1. Thessalonikerbriefes, des Galaterbriefes und*

emphasized the apologetic nature of II Corinthians but at the same time I was reluctant to categorize it as an apology, since the primary aim of the letter is to move the recipients to a new understanding of Paul.⁴⁹ I underlined II Corinthians 1. 12–14 as the *propositio* of the letter, but was careful not to use the Latin term in order to suggest an identity between epistolary works and the categories pertaining to speeches of classical rhetoric.⁵⁰ The emphasis on II Corinthians 1. 12–14 as the letter thesis seems to be in accordance with recent work on II Corinthians.⁵¹ To the extent that rhetorical categories can be heuristically used to interpret Pauline letters, which I believe they can,⁵² I maintain that the most viable solution is to think of II Corinthians as a deliberative letter with a strong apologetic touch or as representative of an apologetic mode of thinking.⁵³ I emphasize the nature of the letter, because I think that the main purpose of the letter is — somewhat similarly to I Corinthians — to achieve a changed understanding on the part of the addressees. In this manner, my reading of the letter while underlining the difference from I Corinthians at the same time stresses the continuities that exist between the two letters both with regard to overall rhetoric and to the emphasis placed on the aspect of understanding.

des Philipperbriefes, Göttinger Theologische Arbeiten, 45 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991), p. 114.

⁴⁹ Anders Klostergaard Petersen, 'Paulus som apologet?', in *Apologetik i Det Nye Testamente*, ed. by Aage Pilgaard, Antikken og Kristendommen, 2 (Copenhagen: Anis, 2005), pp. 15–37 (p. 21).

⁵⁰ Cf. the cautious analysis of S. Byrskog, 'Epistolography, Rhetoric and Letter Prescript: Romans 1.1–7 as a Test Case', *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 65 (1997), 27–46, in which he warns against unproblematically using rhetorical categories for interpreting epistolary works. See also the cautious remarks of Stanley Kent Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, Library of Early Christianity, 5 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), p. 52.

⁵¹ Vegge, *2 Corinthians*, p. 373, who in a footnote refers to other scholars who have emphasized this passage as the main theme of the letter. Other scholars have understood 2. 17 to be the *propositio* of the letter; see, for instance, Ben Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), pp. 371–74.

⁵² Margaret M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians*, Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie, 28 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991), is exemplary of how rhetorical categories can be used to shed light on the analysis of a Pauline letter.

⁵³ For the latter category as different to genre specifically, see my 'The Diversity of Apologetics: From Genre to a Mode of Thinking', in *Critique and Apologetics: Jews, Christians and Pagans in Antiquity*, ed. by Anders-Christian Jacobsen, Jörg Ulrich, and David Brakke, Early Christianity in the Context of Antiquity, 4 (Frankfurt: Lang, 2009), pp. 15–41 (pp. 34–36).

It may well be as it has been argued by Ivar Vegge that this changed understanding on the part of the Corinthians should lead to reconciliation between Paul and his addressees,⁵⁴ but I think it is a slight misnomer to entitle the letter a Letter of Reconciliation.⁵⁵ If we accept that 1. 12–14 is the main thesis of the letter, then the letter is a Letter of Understanding: ‘For our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience that we have behaved in the world and still more toward you, with holiness and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God. For we write you nothing but what you can read and understand; I hope you will understand fully, as you have understood in part, that you can be proud of us as we can be of you, on the day of the Lord Jesus.’

Understanding as the Central Point for Othering in II Corinthians

The thanksgiving of the letter (1. 3–11) includes ten occurrences of the term *parakaloun/paraklēsis*, thus underlining the importance of this element for an appraisal of the letter. In addition to the emphasis placed on comfort, Paul underscores the state which the comfort is meant to overcome. He uses both *thlipsis/thlibein* and *pathēma/paskō* four times. Paul emphasizes God as ‘the father of our lord Jesus Christ and the father of mercies and all comfort who will comfort us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted’ (1. 3–4). In the next verse Paul points to the relationship between affliction and comfort: ‘For as the sufferings of Christ abound for us, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.’ In the following two verses Paul spells out the implications of this for his relationship to the Corinthians. Paul’s affliction serves the comfort and salvation of the Corinthians (1. 6a). The Corinthians and Paul are united in comfort and sufferings: ‘and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer’ (1. 6b–c). Paul expresses his certainty about the Corinthians’ reaction, since he has a firm hope for the Corinthians based on his knowledge (*eidotes*) that as they share in the sufferings, they will also share in the comfort (1. 7). In this manner, Paul has created a group identity between the Corinthians and himself. They are united in the same sufferings and comfort which ultimately derive from God. Hence, Paul is not — so the rhetoric

⁵⁴ Vegge, *2 Corinthians*, pp. 169–215, 373–74.

⁵⁵ Cf. the title of Vegge’s book and Bieringer, ‘Plädoyer für die Einheitlichkeit’, pp. 177–78.

— pushing himself forward on the Corinthians. He is acting as God's mediator towards the Corinthians.

In the next verses Paul relates how he — although formulated in first person plural — has experienced a great affliction in Asia so that he even despaired of life itself. He even carried the sentence of death within himself in order not to rely on himself but on God who raises the dead (1. 9). Here we find the first clear indication of the line of demarcation that will be used in order to separate Paul and his followers from the rhetorically constructed out-group. They are people who rely on themselves rather than on God. In v. 10 God is invoked as the one who 'has delivered us from so deadly a peril, and he will deliver us; on him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again'. The verse paves the way for incorporating in the next verse the addressees into the mythic relationship between Paul and God. The Corinthians are summoned to contribute in prayer to Paul's project, so that many will give thanks on Paul's behalf for the favour granted to him from God in answer to many prayers. As argued above, I understand this sentence to be an anticipation of the subsequent enjoinder of the Corinthians to contribute abundantly to the collection.

The thesis of the letter contributes to the subsequent demarcation of Paul and his followers from the out-group by creating the basic categories that will be used as the decisive taxon throughout the letter. In v. 12 Paul makes it clear that he has behaved towards the Corinthians in accordance with God: 'For our boast is this,⁵⁶ the testimony of our conscience that we have behaved in the world, and still more toward you, with holiness (*haploteti*) and godly sincerity (*eilikreineia*), not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God.' While defending himself against the accusations of the Corinthians (or at least some influential members of the Corinthian community) he simultaneously paves the way for his subsequent attack on the rivaling apostles for acting in accordance with worldly wisdom. The categories invoked belong to exactly the same basic apocalyptic structure which also works as the *raison d'être* for the entire argument throughout I Corinthians (1. 18–2. 5).⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Since boasting and the related issue of commendation are important motifs throughout the letter (3. 1–6; 10. 12–12. 13), Paul already at this stage paves the way for his subsequent argument that unlike the 'intruding' apostles he is not in need of letters of commendation, nor does he boast of his own merits. On the contrary, Paul's boasting is of the Lord (10. 17) or of his sufferings which mirrors the crucified Jesus (12. 5). For the importance of these two aspects for an understanding of II Corinthians, see D. F. Watson, 'Paul and Boasting', in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World*, ed. by Sampley, pp. 77–100 (pp. 81–95), and E. Agosto, 'Paul and Commendation', in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World*, ed. by Sampley, pp. 101–33 (p. 110).

⁵⁷ For an emphasis of these categories as the basic structure of Paul's thinking, see the works of Henrik Tronier: 'Hellenistic Hermeneutics and Paul's Idea of the Spirit in First Corinthians', in

To the extent that the Corinthians are accusing Paul of misconduct towards them they are from the perspective of Paul's rhetoric blind to God's wisdom; that is, they are displaying an understanding belonging to the realm of worldly wisdom. The importance of I Corinthians for an appraisal of the problems that have led Paul to write II Corinthians is evident from vv. 13–14: 'For we write you nothing but what you can read and understand; I hope you will understand fully, as you have understood us in part, that you can be proud of us as we can be of you, on the day of the Lord Jesus.' Paul is here referring to the consequences which I Corinthians has had on the community. Contrary to the accusations made against him for being weak and not daring to arrive in person in Corinth, he turns the argument upside down. To the extent that the Corinthians have not and will not understand him they are displaying a mode of understanding that is contrary to God and in accordance with worldly wisdom. In this manner, Paul implicitly rejects responsibility for the problems that have risen between him and the Corinthians. They originate with the Corinthians who have failed to understand Paul fully. The Corinthians should understand that they stand in an indissoluble relationship to Paul. He is their boast, just as they are his boast on the day of judgement (1. 14).

In a section dealing with Paul's changed travel plans (1. 15–24), Paul emphasizes how he did not act lightly or vacillate (*en elaphria*). He challenges the Corinthians by asking them if he made his plans according to the flesh (1. 17). Although it is not spelled out at this stage, Paul paves the way for his subsequent argument that the rivalling apostles are acting fleshly. Paul, on the other hand, acted in the interest of the Corinthians by not coming to them. It was in order to spare them that he refrained from returning (1. 23).

In 2. 14–17 Paul resumes his thanksgiving. The intermediary section concerns the problems caused by the Tearful Letter and the case with the sex sinner. The thanksgiving invokes the same apocalyptic structure also underlying I Corinthians 1. 18–2. 5. Paul gives thanks to God who is said always to lead Paul and his fellows in triumph in Christ. As it has been convincingly argued by John Fitzgerald, the military image is far from a cry of triumph.⁵⁸ On the contrary, Paul is referring to

The New Testament in its Hellenistic Context, ed. by Gunnlaugur A. Jónsson, Einar Sigurbjörnsson, and Pétur Péturson, *Studia theologica islandica*, 10 (Reykjavik: Háskóli Íslands, 1996), pp. 37–55; and 'The Corinthian Correspondence between Philosophical Idealism and Apocalypticism', in *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide*, ed. by Engberg-Pedersen, pp. 165–96.

⁵⁸ John T. Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel: An Examination of the Catalogues of Hardships in the Corinthian Correspondence*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series, 99 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), pp. 160–63.

himself and his fellows as conquered captives of God (cf. the metaphor of I Corinthians 4. 9 of Paul as a spectacle of God to the world and the angels). Paul moves on to argue that God at every place makes the fragrance of knowledge (*gnōsis*) of himself evident (*phanerōn*) through Paul and his fellows. First, it is important to note the emphasis placed on knowledge. In line with the thesis of the letter, Paul stresses how knowledge and understanding are essential for obtaining the right relationship to Paul and thereby, ultimately, to God. Second, the term *phanerōn* is a key motif in the letter, since Paul throughout the letter uses the distinction internal vs. external, light vs. darkness, and veiled vs. overt or evident to emphasize the difference between himself and the ‘intruding’ apostles. At the same time, he embeds this distinction in the apocalyptic differentiation between heavenly and earthly, godly/pneumatic and fleshly which enables him to turn traditional values on their heads. In this manner, he is capable of arguing that his own message conveys God’s wisdom, whereas his opponents embody fleshly wisdom. To the extent that this is unclear to the Corinthians they are representatives of earthly and fleshly wisdom. If, on the other hand, they embrace Paul’s understanding, they will mirror God’s wisdom. The radical change of values which enables Paul to make this move is the apocalyptic structure that turns traditional values on their head. If God’s wisdom amounts to folly in the world of men, then human wisdom equals foolishness from the perspective of God (cf. I Corinthians 1. 18–20). Hence, Paul may argue that he and his fellows embody the fragrance of Christ before God. They are to those who are being saved a fragrance of life, whereas to those who perish they are a putrid smell stemming from a corpse (2. 15–16; cf. 4. 10, where Paul ostensibly uses the image of a pallbearer).⁵⁹ In 2. 16 Paul raises the rhetorical question about who is sufficient for these things, and in the next verse he — implicitly by not mentioning them by name — wards off his opponents as the many who peddle the word of God (*hoi polloi kapēleuontes*). In contrast to them, Paul and his fellows as men of sincerity and as of God speak in Christ before God (2. 17). In this manner, Paul has established the basis for the subsequent othering throughout the letter. His opponents are like sophists prepared to exploit the Corinthians. The word *kapeleuō* has since Plato been a stock motif in criticism against sophistry (cf. *Protagoras* 313c: ‘the sophist happens to be a sort of merchant (*emporos*) or pedlar of goods (*kapēlos tōn agōgimōn*) on which a soul is nourished’; *The Sophist* 231d: ‘and thirdly did he not show up as a pedlar (*kapēlos*) of these same articles?’). Paul will use this tradition to spike his opponents (cf. 4. 5; 11. 20; 12. 14).

⁵⁹ Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel*, pp. 177–80.

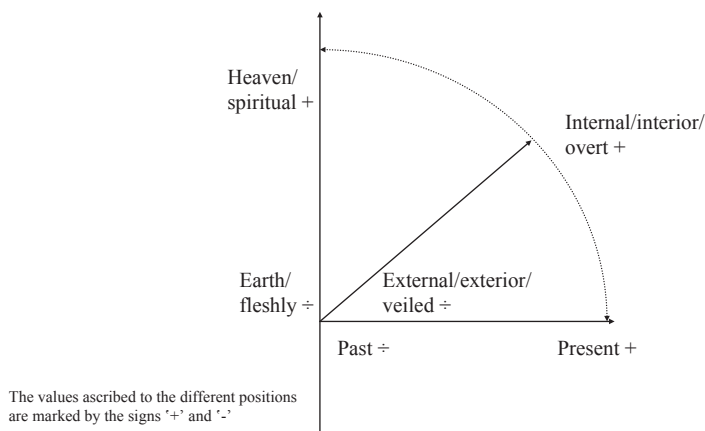
In the next section Paul resumes the theme of external vs. internal, covert and overt to marginalize his opponents. He emphatically states that unlike his opponents he is not in need of letters of recommendation. On the contrary, the Corinthians are his 'possession' by being his letter of recommendation before God. Consistent with the apocalyptic structure invoked in 2. 14–17, Paul argues that the Corinthians are a letter of recommendation written on his and his fellows' hearts. To the extent that people possess the right understanding, they should be able to recognize and read it as such (3. 2), since the Corinthians make it evident (*phaneroumenoi*) that they are a letter from Christ delivered by Paul and his fellows written not with ink but with the living spirit of God, and not on tablets of stone but on the tablets of the heart (3. 3).

The following section in which Paul compares the old and the new covenant continues this discussion by turning Paul's present opponents into representatives of a deficient understanding of the past (3. 4–18). Whereas Paul can boast of his confidence in Christ, since he has his confidence (*pepoithēsis*) and competence (*bikanotēs*) — so the rhetoric — from God, the situation is different with respect to his opponents (3. 3–5). Even though the explicit attack on them is saved until 10. 1–13. 10, there is no doubt that Paul already at this stage implicitly attacks them for being people who have their confidence and competence from themselves. It is difficult to see how they actually differ from Paul in their understanding except for the fact that they have — that is, from Paul's perspective — intruded on something to which they do not have any legitimate access. The comparison between the covenant of Moses, which is attributed an ephemeral and condemning nature, and the covenant of Christ, ascribed an eternal and saving character, enables Paul to stretch his apocalyptic, traditionally vertically formulated structure onto a horizontal historical line of thinking. In this manner, the differences between heavenly and worldly, spiritual and fleshly, now becomes a difference between past and present, with Paul representing the present covenant of Christ. At the same time, the apocalyptic structure, as we have already noted, is complemented by an axis of depth that stretches the differences on the vertical and horizontal axes onto an axis divided between the difference between external and internal, outward and inward (see figure below).⁶⁰ The values projected onto the

⁶⁰ It is obvious from Galatians and Romans that Paul can supplement the negative past of the model by reduplicating the past into a division between a legitimate past characterized by the figure of Abraham and an illegitimate negative past characterized by Moses. This reduplication enables Paul to claim for his understanding the status of true heir in the present of the true tradition of the past.

axis of depth enables Paul to elaborate the argument of the letter thesis (1. 12–14), that is, that the Corinthians' lack of full understanding stems from their external manner of thinking. To the extent that the Corinthians exemplify such a deficient mode of understanding, they resemble the 'intruding' apostles who from Paul's perspective are the epitome of earthly, fleshly, interior, and a negatively ascribed past mode of thinking. One may wonder to what extent Paul's opponents have, in fact, made use of the Moses tradition to arrogate to themselves a superior status over Paul. On the one hand, it is rhetorically unlikely that Paul would have recourse to this tradition were it not for the fact that it played a role in the opponents' 'staging' of themselves. On the other hand, it is difficult to ascertain the exact nature of their use of this tradition, given that our only access to it is by means of Paul's polemic (see above). Additionally, it does not feature prominently in the direct polemic against the opponents in 10–13. Be that as it may, based on a rather idiosyncratic use of this tradition Paul is able to claim for himself and his understanding freedom and the spirit of the Lord. The underlying implicit argument is, of course, that the Corinthians can only expect a condemning slavery from the other apostles.

Paul's apocalyptic structure



Simultaneously with Paul's implicit castigation of his opponents, the argument serves as an apology for his own ministry and behaviour towards the Corinthians. In chapter 4, he takes the argument to new heights by claiming that he has his ministry by the mercy of God and, therefore, does not lose heart (4. 1). Unlike the opponents, Paul has renounced hidden things of shame by not walking in craftiness (*panourgia*) or handling the word of God deceitfully (*dolountes ton logos theou*). We see once again how Paul spikes his opponents by implicitly — since they are not at this stage mentioned by name — accusing them of being plain sophists. Paul and his fellows,

on the other hand, have by a manifestation of truth (*tē phanērōsei tēs alētheias*) commended themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God (4. 2). At this point, Paul resumes the metaphors of veiled and overt. To the extent that his gospel is hidden (*kekalummenon*), it is hidden only to those who perish, those who have no share in and have been blinded so they are not capable of seeing the light that stems from the gospel about the glory of Christ (4. 4). Paul emphasizes how he and his fellows have only been preaching Jesus Christ as lord and themselves as the servants of the Corinthians through Jesus Christ. It should come as no surprise that the implicit statement is that the opponents, on the other hand, have preached themselves and arrogated to themselves the status of lordship over the Corinthians.

In the next section, 4. 7–18, Paul has recourse to the image of Christ's death already voiced in 2. 15–16. By means of a *peristasis* catalogue, Paul argues that his opponents have not succeeded in crushing him. On the contrary, he always carries Jesus's death (*nekrōsis*) around on his body and, thereby, makes the life of Jesus manifest (*phanerōthē*) in his and his fellows' mortal flesh (4. 11). At the same time as Paul inscribes all his activities in the mythic story of Jesus by emphasizing his sufferings and his carrying around of Jesus's death, he is invoking a strong code within Graeco-Roman moral philosophy, that is, the suffering sage who displays his superiority by enduring sufferings (cf. Epictetus, *Arrian Discourses*, 1. 24. 1: 'It is difficulties that show what men are').⁶¹ John Fitzgerald is quite right to say about this passage that 'in all these respects Paul appears fully like the suffering sage who is triumphant over his hardships!'.⁶²

In 4. 16 Paul emphasizes that he does not lose heart (*engkakoumen*), since he has the knowledge that tells him that even though his 'outward man' will deteriorate, his inward man is being renewed day by day. The contrast between interior and exterior is once again also applied to the difference between Paul and his opponents. Paul knows that the slight momentary affliction will prepare for him and his fellows an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, because they do not look to the things seen, but to the things that are unseen. In order to spell this out to his addressees, he emphasizes how the things that are seen are of a transitory nature, whereas those that are unseen are eternal (4. 18). This image is taken to new heights in chapter 5, where Paul again underscores his mode of thinking as contrary to one that is according to the flesh (5. 16). I will leave the argument at this stage

⁶¹ See my 'Paulus: En antikarismatisk karismatiker?', in *Fra Buddha til Beckham*, ed. by Povl Götke, Jonas Havelund, and Kristian Rasmussen (Odense: Syddansk Universitetsforlag, 2005), pp. 45–65 (pp. 55–58).

⁶² Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel*, p. 166.

and proceed to highlight the othering that takes place in the last four chapters of the letter where Paul — on the basis of the anticipated support of the Corinthians exemplified by their presupposed contribution to the collection — moves on to a direct rhetorical assault on the opponents. It should be obvious at this point how Paul turns his controversies with the Corinthians and the opponents into a matter of understanding. The emphasis placed on understanding is embedded in an apocalyptic structure that enables Paul to castigate his opponents by arguing that they are exemplifying all the elements that are contrary to God. Additionally, we have seen how Paul's othering of his opponents takes place by categorizing the opponents as sophists. Finally, we have observed how Paul is careful placing his addressees in a rhetorical situation where they — forced by the rhetoric — have to take Paul's side; whether they did so in practice is, of course, another matter about which we unfortunately have no accessible knowledge.

Paul's Attack on his Opponents

The othering of II Corinthians reaches new heights in 10–13, where Paul proceeds to a direct attack on the rivals. To a certain extent it is fair to argue that the chapters are an 'outprint' or a making explicit of those implicit attacks that the previous chapters included. Apart from the fact that Paul's opponents have ostensibly boasted of their 'ethnic' Jewish prerogatives, there is nothing to suggest that they represent an alternative understanding to Paul's gospel. Paul's basic criticism of them amounts to saying that they have intruded on his missionary field and have interfered with the Corinthian community as his possession (10. 12–18). One may, of course, argue that there is a strong tension with regard to a different understanding of boasting and recommendation; but one should be careful not to be trapped by Paul's rhetoric. When Paul claims that he is not in need of letters of recommendation (3. 1–3), this, of course, goes against the grain of the argument, since it is difficult not to understand II Corinthians as one long letter of recommendation in which Paul appeals to the Corinthians' recognition of him as their one and only apostle. Simultaneously, it is important to note how Paul's whole argument about boasting and recommendation is deeply embedded in a Graeco-Roman rhetoric about these phenomena. Paul is throughout the letter accusing his opponents of false boasting, while ascribing to himself the role of a legitimate boaster, that is, in compliance with ancient notions of legitimate and illegitimate boasting.⁶³

⁶³ Cf. Watson, 'Paul and Boasting', pp. 78–81.

In 10. 2 Paul makes it plain to the recipients that they should segregate themselves from the ‘intruding’ apostles in order not to fall prey to boldness on Paul’s part: ‘I beg of you that when I am present I may not have to show boldness (*tharrēsai*) with such confidence (*tē pepoithēsei*) as I count on showing against some who suspect us of walking in fleshly fashion (*kata sarka*).’ The threat is elaborated in v. 6, where Paul self-consciously claims that he is being ready to punish all disobedience, when the obedience of the Corinthians is complete. The complete obedience of the Corinthians obviously consists in their adherence to Paul and in consequence their rejection of the other apostles.

In 10. 12 Paul gives in a biting ironic tone the keynote for the subsequent comparison of himself with his opponents: ‘Not that we venture to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves. But when they measure themselves by one another, and compare themselves, they are without understanding.’ Despite his purported unwillingness — fully in line with elite social expectations of the day — to enter into a comparison (*synkrisis*) with his opponents, which would suggest a certain equality or similarity with them, Paul does enter into a comparison — although reluctantly, that is, according to his own rhetoric. In 11. 1 he intonates the beginning of the so-called fool’s speech, although it does not properly begin before 11. 21b. Rhetorically, he pleads the addressees to bear with him in a little foolishness, hence the name of the speech as the fool’s speech. In the image of the one who gives the bride away Paul claims that he with the zeal of God has betrothed the Corinthians as a pure bride to the husband Christ (11. 2). Paul, however, fears that their thoughts — as the serpent which deceived Eve with cunning (*panourgia*, cf. 4. 2) — will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. Once again it is conspicuous to note the emphasis being placed on the element of right understanding. In line with the main thesis of the letter, the Corinthians are enjoined to adhere to Paul by embracing a ‘full understanding’ that will simultaneously protect them against the craftiness of the serpent which is, of course, a circumlocution of Paul’s opponents.

In 11. 6 Paul again emphasizes how he has acted overtly (*phanerōsantes*) towards the Corinthians (in the context of 11. 7–11 it is obvious that the defence pertains to Paul’s rejection to receive economic support from them). The implicit claim is, of course, that to the extent that they have not been capable of understanding this, they are exemplifying a deficient mode of cognition which is also contrary to God. Paul is acting and will act to undermine the claim of his opponents that they ‘in their boasted mission’ work on the same terms as Paul (11. 12). It is obvious from this statement — as we have also noted in our theoretical reflections — that the opponents are considered dangerous not because they represent an entirely

different understanding, but because they embody the proximate other who by the proximity threatens the status and world view of Paul. The resemblances between Paul and his alleged opponents are evident from the *synkrisis* of 11. 22–12. 10. Of all the ethnic prerogatives that his opponents may have emphasized Paul can point to the same credentials (11. 22–23a). Paul, however, has recourse to the apocalyptic structure discussed above by underlining his weaknesses and afflictions. As already argued, not only does his point come through within the framework of the apocalyptic world view but it is also compliant with virtues emphasized in the Graeco-Roman moral philosophical literature.⁶⁴ Paul is depicting himself as the suffering sage triumphing over hardships and at the same time as the apostle who is mirroring God's presence in the world as it is manifested through afflictions, the apostolic afflictions ultimately being a repercussion of the sufferings inflicted upon Jesus.

The closeness between Paul and his opponents leads Paul into a heated attack on the 'intruding' apostles in 11. 13. They are 'false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ'. The difference between them and Paul correlates according to Paul to the contrast between God and Satan: 'And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is not strange if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds' (11. 14–15). Additionally, Paul sardonically repeats the statement already made in 2. 17 that his opponents are sophists exploiting the Corinthians, whereas Paul is acting in their best interest: 'For you gladly bear with fools, being wise yourselves! For you bear it if a man makes slaves (*katadouloi*) of you, or preys upon you (*katesthie*), or takes advantage of you (*lambanei*), or puts on airs, or strikes you in the face' (11. 19–20).

When Paul proceeds in 12. 1 to 'boast' of his visions and revelations of the Lord, he is ostensibly playing the same game as his opponents, but also here he is able to defeat them by embedding these phenomena within the apocalyptic framework that posits weakness over elements ascribed status from an 'earthly' perspective. Paul may boast of the man whom God has taken to paradise (12. 4), but he will not boast on his own behalf except of his weaknesses (12. 5). To keep Paul

⁶⁴ In addition to the works already mentioned in notes 58 and 61 by John T. Fitzgerald and myself, an extensive discussion of Paul's *peristasis* catalogues with a clear perception of their relationship to comparable catalogues of Graeco-Roman literature is found in Martin Ebner, *Leidenslisten und Apostelbrief: Untersuchungen zu Form, Motivik und Funktion der Peristaskataloge*, Forschung zur Bibel, 66 (Würzburg: Echter, 1991). For a discussion of the *peristasis* catalogues of II Corinthians, see *ibid.*, pp. 93–330.

from being too elated by the abundance of revelations given to him he was given a thorn in the flesh, an angel of Satan (12. 7). Despite Paul's pleas to God to have the thorn taken away from him, God responds by stating that his grace will suffice (12. 8–9), since God's power is completed in weakness (12. 9b, cf. the argument of I Corinthians 1. 18–2. 5). Needless to say, this and similar statements are a direct response to the criticism raised by members of the Corinthian community against Paul that he hesitates or even does not dare to come to Corinth because of his physical appearance (cf. 10. 1–2, 10–11). In 12. 10 Paul completes the argument by once again underscoring his similarity with Christ as it is expressed through weaknesses: 'For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities; for when I am weak, then I am strong (*dunatos*).'⁷ In this manner, Paul can prove his superiority over the other apostles by invoking a string of the moral philosophical tradition, that is, the suffering sage triumphing over hardships. Simultaneously, Paul based on the apocalyptic structure can posit himself in the role of God's manifestation in the world in general and in the Corinthian community in particular. Thus, Paul's perpetual emphasis on his weaknesses becomes a powerful rhetorical weapon in his othering and outcast of the 'intruding' apostles: 'For I was not at all inferior to these superlative apostles (*tōn hyperlian apostolōn*), even though I am nothing' (12. 11b–c).

In the last chapter, Paul proceeds one last time to enjoin his recipients to comply with his description of the events and, thus, to accept the basic argument of the letter. The implication, of course, is that the Corinthians should segregate themselves from the other apostles and show complete loyalty to Paul by an abundant contribution to the collection. If they do not consent with Paul's admonition and take it seriously in their future action, Paul may have to be severe in his use of authority given to him by the Lord for edification and not for tearing down (13. 10).

A Brief Conclusion

Based on a case study of II Corinthians, we have observed one concrete example of othering. Paul construes in the letter an identity for himself and for his recipients that rests on a demarcation from the purported intruding apostles. Emphasis on understanding and cognition plays a pivotal role throughout the letter. To the extent that the Corinthians are accepting the influence of the other apostles they are exemplifying a deficient mode of understanding. To the extent that they embrace Paul's world view as it is expressed throughout the letter they have become

representatives of a full understanding. The othering that takes place through the letter is partially based on the *raison d'être* of a foundational apocalyptic structure, partially on comparable traditions within Graeco-Roman moral philosophy which emphasize hardships as the challenge par excellence for the sage to display his wisdom. Unlike the main strand of scholarship which has emphasized the differences between Paul and his opponents, we have — partly based on the introductory theoretical reflections on othering — come to the result that there is not that vast a difference between Paul and the other apostles. In fact, it is the proximity between them which forces Paul to engage in a fervent display of rhetorical othering in order to win the Corinthian community for himself alone.

In addition to the advantages gained for the interpretation of II Corinthians by an understanding that stresses similarity and resemblance between Paul and his opponents rather than difference, we obtain another important result. Paul may no longer be seen as the lonely figure of nascent Christianity or as Wrede would have it, in fact, the first founder of Christianity. The emphasis placed on similarities between Paul and his opponents should lead us to think of his position as, perhaps, being more prevalent in the early Christ-movement than it traditionally has been acknowledged.

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DEVOTION AND DEVIANCE: THE CULT OF CYBELE AND THE OTHERS WITHIN

Marika Rauhala

In 204 BCE, the cult of the Anatolian mother goddess Cybele was brought to Rome in triumph. The highest leadership of the state took an active role in establishing the cult, and the goddess was embraced with equal enthusiasm by the people. In the midst of the Second Punic War the arrival of Cybele seemed to offer a solution to various problems. She was celebrated as the long-lost mistress of the Trojan ancestors, as well as the protector of the future success and fortune of the empire. However, the ecstatic cult ceremonies, and especially the deviant behaviour and appearance of her worshippers, soon gave rise to contradictory reactions among the Romans.

In the following article I will explore the image of the cult of Cybele, who was also known as the Mother of gods, in the late Roman Empire (*c.* 150–400 CE). My focus will be mainly on the image of the devotees and priests as it appears in literature. Since the religious discourse of this period is marked by the rivalry between the adherents of the traditional cults and the rising Christians, I will especially look at the ways in which both the pagan¹ elite and the Christian elite utilized and further developed the image for their own purposes. The concept of image should be understood here as a mental impression or, more precisely, a cognitive structure of knowledge concerning the object of the image, as it is defined in the historical study of images.² Two key features related to the concept of image

¹ The same reservations concerning the use of the terms ‘pagan’ and ‘Christian’ should be noted here as have been observed by Kahlos in her article ‘The Shadow of the Shadow’ in this volume.

² See the Introduction to this volume; on the connection between the concept of image and the knowledge structures, or schemas, in cognitive psychology, see Olavi K. Fält, ‘Theoretical Roots

will be especially important to the present study. First, the collective images shared by a group of people, by a certain society, community, or (sub)culture are perceived as a connective element holding the group together, and therefore great concern is invested in the communication and upholding of these public images.³ In other words, we can consider the construction of the images pertaining to the cult of Cybele as a way of forging common pagan and Christian identities alike. In the second place, I will explore the assumed permanence of the image in both late antique pagan and Christian discourses by setting those image compositions against the preceding image. Therefore, I start by surveying the republican and early imperial literary depictions of the cult which form a vital background for understanding the perceptions in Late Antiquity.

Divided Reception: Early Image of the Cult of Cybele in Rome

By the time of Cybele's arrival, the adoption of foreign cults into Rome was already a long-standing tradition, and especially the crisis of the third century had encouraged the Roman authorities to seek outside support for their actions from foreign divinities. The Sibylline Books, which were interpreted by the priestly college *decemviri sacris faciundis* under senatorial control, held a central place in directing the Roman religion as well as incorporating alien cults.⁴ So when the circumstances of 205 BC again called for divine support, the Sibylline Books were consulted. A prophecy was discovered advising that in order to expel the enemy from Italy, the Idaean Mother should be brought to Rome.⁵ A delegation, consisting of

of the Study of Historical Images', in *Imagology and Cross-Cultural Encounters in History*, ed. by Kari Alenius, Olavi K. Fält, and Markus Mertaniemi, *Studia Historica Septentrionalia*, 56 (Rovaniemi: Societas historica Finlandiae septentrionalis, 2008), pp. 37–43 (pp. 38–39) with further bibliography.

³ Kenneth E. Boulding, *The Image: Knowledge in Life and Society* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1956), pp. 14–15, 64–65, 132–33.

⁴ See, e.g., Erich S. Gruen, *Studies in Greek Culture and Roman Policy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990; repr. 1996), pp. 7–10; Philippe Borgeaud, *Mother of the Gods: From Cybele to the Virgin Mary*, trans. by Lysa Hochroth (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), p. 58; Lynn E. Roller, *In Search of God the Mother: The Cult of Anatolian Cybele* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 280–81 with further references.

⁵ Livius, *Ab urbe condita*, 29. 10. 5 (Livy, *Books XXVIII–XXX*, edn with trans. by Frank Gardner Moore, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949)): 'Quandoque hostis alienigena terrae Italiae bellum intulisset, eum pelli Italia vincique posse, si mater Idaea a

distinguished representatives from five important families, was sent to Asia Minor to fetch the sacred stone representing the goddess. As advised by the Delphic oracle, the best man of Rome was chosen to receive the goddess, and the honour fell upon the young cousin of Scipio Africanus, P. Cornelius Scipio Nasica. Also the matrons came together to welcome the goddess, and a certain Claudia Quinta is often mentioned among them as the best woman. The sacred stone was temporarily placed in the temple of Victory, and the arrival of the goddess was commemorated with annual games called the Megalesia. In 191 BCE a temple of her own was dedicated to Cybele on the Palatine.⁶

Pessinunte Romam advecta foret' ('If ever a foreign foe should invade the land of Italy, he could be driven out of Italy and defeated if the Idaean Mother should be brought from Pessinus to Rome'). Livius also adds that the consultation was preceded by a sudden wave of religiosity and showers of stone. Livius, *Ab urbe condita*, 29. 10. 4; cf. Appianus, *Hannibalica*, 7. 9. 56. The enemy mentioned in the prophecy was, of course, Hannibal, and several ancient authors suggest that the Second Punic War and Hannibal's presence in Italy were the most likely reasons for the introduction of the cult: Cicero, *De haruspicum responsis*, 13. 27; Silius Italicus, *Punica*, 17. 1–4; Appianus, *Hannibalica*, 7. 9. 56; Arnobius, *Adversus nationes*, 2. 73, 7. 49; Julianus, *Oratio*, 5. 159c. This may, however, be a later addition to the story. It has been noted that by 205 Hannibal's defeat already seemed inevitable. See, e.g., Garth Thomas, 'Magna Mater and Attis', in *ANRW*, II. 17. 3 (1984), pp. 1500–35 (p. 1503); Gruen, *Studies in Greek Culture*, pp. 6–7; Roller, *In Search of God the Mother*, p. 266. Gruen, *Studies in Greek Culture*, pp. 21–29, has suggested that the introduction of a new cult was more connected to the decision to move the war to Carthaginian soil. The adoption of the Phrygian Cybele was also a good way to manifest Rome's commitment to its eastern allies as well as prepare the ground for future expansion. See also Sarolta A. Takács, 'Magna Deum Mater Idaea, Cybele and Catullus' Attis', in *Cybele, Attis and Related Cults: Essays in Memory of M. J. Vermaseren*, ed. by Eugene N. Lane (Leiden: Brill, 1996), pp. 367–86 (pp. 368–73); Borgeaud, *Mother of the Gods*, pp. 72–73.

⁶ The most detailed descriptions are Livius, *Ab urbe condita*, 29. 10. 4–29. 11. 8, 29. 14. 2–14, and Ovidius, *Fasti*, 4. 247–348, but the story is constantly reiterated and referred to in literature: Cicero, *De haruspicum responsis*, 13. 27; Varro, *De lingua Latina*, 6. 15; Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 34. 33. 2–3; Strabo, *Geographica*, 12. 5. 3; Silius Italicus, *Punica*, 17. 1–47; Appianus, *Hannibalica*, 7. 9. 56; Herodianus, *Ab excessu divi Marci*, 1. 11. 3–5; Arnobius, *Adversus nationes*, 7. 49; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *De viris illustribus*, 46; Julianus, *Oratio*, 5. 159 c–161 a. Especially Scipio Nasica and Claudia Quinta became embodiments of republican virtue and the subject of legend. The story goes that the reputation of Claudia Quinta was questioned. She appealed to the goddess who performed a miracle, thus proving her chastity. Ovidius, *Fasti*, 4. 297–328; Cicero, *Pro Caelio*, 14. 34; Plinius Maior, *Naturalis historia*, 7. 120. 34–35; Silius Italicus, *Punica*, 17. 23–45; Propertius, *Elegiae*, 4. 11. 51–52; Velleius Paterculus, *Historiae*, 2. 3. 1; Statius, *Silvae*, 1. 2. 245–46; Suetonius, *Tiberius*, 2. 3; Appianus, *Hannibalica*, 7. 9. 56; Cassius Dio, *Historia Romana*, 17. 61; Minucius Felix, *Octavius*, 7. 3; Herodianus, *Ab excessu divi Marci*, 1. 11. 4–5; Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 22. 9. 5; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *De viris illustribus*, 46; Julianus,

All in all, the story itself and its frequent retelling demonstrate the interest in the goddess and common recognition of her cult. This enthusiasm seems to be especially connected with the Roman aristocracy. It was hardly a coincidence that representatives of different notable families and political factions were present at the introduction of the cult.⁷ The opportunity to achieve fame through the cult also presented itself at the yearly festivals: the organizing of the Megalesian games offered rising statesmen the chance to excel,⁸ and while the crowds gathered to follow the boisterous procession along the streets, the nobility were having lavish feasts to celebrate the occasion.⁹

Oratio, 5. 160 b–d; Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, 2. 5, 10. 16. In the accounts of Statius, Herodian, pseudo-Aurelius Victor, and Julian, the woman proving her quality is said to be a Vestal Virgin. Diodorus, by contrast, says that the Senate also chose the best woman and gives her name as Valeria. Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 34. 33. 2–3. Valerius Maximus and Tacitus relate that the statue of Claudia Quinta miraculously survived two fires which burned down the temple. Valerius Maximus, *Facta et dicta memorabilia*, 1. 8. 11; Tacitus, *Annales*, 4. 64. The establishment of the temple is recounted in Livius, *Ab urbe condita*, 36. 36. 3–5. For modern discussions on the subject see, e.g., Gruen, *Studies in Greek Culture*, pp. 5–33; Roller, *In Search of God the Mother*, pp. 263–84; Borgeaud, *Mother of the Gods*, pp. 58–62, 70–71, 74–77; Thomas, 'Magna Mater and Attis', pp. 1503–08; Maarten J. Vermaseren, *Cybele and Attis: The Myth and the Cult*, trans. by A. M. H. Lemmers (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977), pp. 38–41; Jan N. Bremmer, 'The Legend of Cybele's Arrival in Rome', in *Studies in Hellenistic Religions*, ed. by Maarten J. Vermaseren (Leiden: Brill, 1979), pp. 9–22.

⁷ On the impartial composition of the delegation and receiving party, see Gruen, *Studies in Greek Culture*, pp. 24–27; Thomas, 'Magna Mater and Attis', pp. 1507–08; Roller, *In Search of God the Mother*, p. 282. 'The message is clear: the goddess was a guest of the traditional Roman governing class; she entered the city under their protection and (by implication) on their terms' as Livy's account is interpreted by Mary Beard, 'The Roman and the Foreign: The Cult of the "Great Mother" in Imperial Rome', in *Shamanism, History, and the State*, ed. by Nicholas Thomas and Caroline Humphrey (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), pp. 164–90 (p. 179).

⁸ See Cassius Dio, *Historia Romana*, 37. 8; cf. Livius, *Ab urbe condita*, 34. 54. 3–4; Cicero, *De haruspicio responsis*, 11. 22–12. 24. Thomas, 'Magna Mater and Attis', pp. 1513–15; Roller, *In Search of God the Mother*, pp. 288–89. The stage performances along with the chariot races brought the whole city together. Cicero, *De haruspicio responsis*, 11. 22; Juvenalis, *Saturae*, 11. 193–97. The horse races are first mentioned by Ovidius (*Fasti*, 4. 389–92).

⁹ *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, ed. by Theodor Mommsen and others (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1893–), I. 1, 235 (*Fasti Praenestini, Mensis Aprilis*); Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*, 18. 2. 11; cf. Ovidius, *Fasti*, 4. 353–58. On the Megalesia and its aristocratic colour, see, e.g., Franz Bömer, 'Kybele in Rom: Die Geschichte ihres Kults als politisches Phänomen', *Römische Mitteilungen*, 71 (1964), 130–51 (pp. 131–32); Vermaseren, *Cybele and Attis*, pp. 124–25; Thomas, 'Magna Mater and Attis', p. 1516; Roller, *In Search of God the Mother*, pp. 283, 289.

The placing of Cybele's temple on the Palatine, inside the *pomerium* and among the important republican monuments, shows that the goddess was already regarded as an essentially Roman goddess. In the Augustan literature the eastern background of Cybele was strongly interlinked with the legend of Rome's Trojan origins.¹⁰ Thus, in his epic account, the *Aeneid*, Vergil describes how Aeneas, after escaping the destruction of Troy, is constantly accompanied and aided by the goddess on his voyage to the Italian shores.¹¹ Ovid takes this one step further and directly relates the adoption of the goddess to the Romans' Trojan ancestry. The ships that carried Cybele to Rome were made from the same trees as the ships of Aeneas, and, according to Ovid, both of their routes followed the same course.¹² *Magna Deum Mater Idaea*, as Cybele was officially called, was not alien to the Romans: she was the goddess and guardian of the Trojan forefathers who had returned amongst them in order to protect the city and guarantee its future success.

However, even beginning with the earliest literary remarks, the image of the cult is characterized by dichotomy: all the acceptable and beneficent features of the cult are referred to as being 'Roman' whereas all the undesirable features are labelled as 'Phrygian'. This division is best attested in the account of Dionysius, where the historian is applauding the Romans for rebuffing all kinds of religious hogwash. In Rome there are no shameful myths of the gods, no bacchanals or corybantism, no divine possession or begging, no secret initiations or dubious nightly revels. The rejection of strange religious habits is particularly remarkable, as Dionysius reminds us, since the Romans have adopted foreign cults as advised by the oracle. As a good example he mentions the cult of Cybele; the praetors sacrifice and celebrate the games in the Roman manner whereas the Phrygian priest and priestess

¹⁰ By the end of the third century BCE, this originally Greek tale of Roman ancestry was widely adopted by the Roman elite, and it can be seen to have affected the way Romans conducted foreign affairs. It seems probable that the association of Cybele with Mount Ida near Troy contributed to her introduction to Rome. Gruen, *Studies in Greek Culture*, pp. 11–15; Takács, 'Magna Deum Mater Idaea', p. 369; Darja Šterbenc Erker, 'Religiöse Universalität und lokale Tradition: Rom und das Römische Reich', in *Die Religion des Imperium Romanum: Koine und Konfrontationen*, ed. by Hubert Cancik and Jörg Rüpke (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), pp. 75–97 (pp. 90–93). Arguing against this interpretation is Thomas, 'Magna Mater and Attis', p. 1504.

¹¹ Vergilius, *Aeneis*, 2. 693–97, 6. 784–87, 7. 139, 9. 77–122, 10. 157–58, 10. 252–55. In general, see T. P. Wiseman, 'Cybele, Virgil and Augustus', in *Poetry and Politics in the Age of Augustus*, ed. by Tony Woodman and David West (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 117–28 (pp. 120–23); Roller, *In Search of God the Mother*, pp. 299–301.

¹² Ovidius, *Fasti*, 4. 249–59, 4. 273–90.

carry the image of the goddess along the streets begging and performing loud music in their customary manner.¹³

This same ambivalence is also present in the aforementioned *Aeneid*. On several occasions Aeneas and his Trojan companions are referred to as being half-men or eunuchs (*semiviri*), or even Phrygian women. Their effeminate appearance, including their flamboyant costumes, turbans, and scented coiffures, is ridiculed, and as a final condition on their settlement in Italy the goddess Juno urges that the conquered Italians should retain their manly voices and clothing.¹⁴

The eunuch priests, known as *galli*, were an integral part of the cult in Rome. Yet, the Romans felt a profound unease towards these self-castrated men who by their very existence challenged the Roman ideas of superiority and social privileges based on masculine gender.¹⁵ The *galli* were described as effeminate half-men whose outward appearance with brightly coloured clothes, headdresses, perfumes, and curly hair resembled women more than men.¹⁶ In fact, the eunuch priests were not even considered to be humans in legal terms. In his account, Valerius Maximus praises the decision to deny one Genucius, a slave and a eunuch priest of Cybele, his inheritance since he had voluntarily castrated himself and could be regarded as neither woman nor man. Even his access to the court was denied in order to stop his 'foul presence and defiled voice' from polluting it.¹⁷

¹³ Dionysius Halicarnassus, *Antiquitates Romanae*, 2. 19. 1–5. On the public procession of the *galli*, see also Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, 2. 618–43; Ovidius, *Fasti*, 4. 181–86.

¹⁴ Vergilius, *Aeneis*, 4. 215–16, 9. 614–20, 12. 97–100, 13. 825. See also Lynn E. Roller, 'The Ideology of the Eunuch Priest', in *Gender and the Body in the Ancient Mediterranean*, ed. by Maria Wyke (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), pp. 118–35 (pp. 129–30); Roller, *In Search of God the Mother*, p. 303.

¹⁵ See Mathew Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch: Masculinity, Gender Ambiguity, and Christian Ideology in Late Antiquity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp. 29–32. Castration was an issue that demanded an explanation: see, e.g., Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, 2. 614–17; Ovidius, *Fasti*, 4. 221–44.

¹⁶ In literature, feminine pronouns were often used to refer to *galli*, e.g., *Anthologia Palatina*, 7. 223; Catullus, *Carmen*, 63; cf. Vergilius, *Aeneis*, 9. 617.

¹⁷ Valerius Maximus, *Facta et dicta memorabilia*, 7. 7. 6 (Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings*, edn with trans. by D. R. Shackleton Bailey, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000)): 'Neque virorum neque mulierum numero haberi debere [...] prouisum est ne obscena Genucii praesentia inquinataque uoce tribunalia magistratuum sub specie petiti iuris polluerentur' ('[Genucius] should not be considered as belonging among men or women [...] the tribunals of our magistrates should not be polluted by the obscene presence and disgusting voice of Genucius, under the pretense that he was seeking justice'; trans. by Henry John Walker in Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Deeds and Sayings: One Thousand Tales from Ancient Rome*

All kinds of negative characteristics were bundled together in the image of the *galli*. The irreversible step that made them incomprehensible creatures in the eyes of ordinary people was, evidently, their voluntary castration. Their bloody knives and willingness to slash themselves were nearly a commonplace in literature.¹⁸ They were described as effeminate, or even feminine, soft, delicate, and sterile.¹⁹ While performing their rituals they were driven mad by the goddess — thus, their unthinkable deeds were explained.²⁰ And even though the priests were deprived of their manhood, they were depicted as being lascivious and profligate.²¹ The learned Romans barely disguised their expressions of horror or repulsion.²²

Since it was forbidden for Romans to castrate themselves and become *galli*,²³ the distrust of foreigners was mingled with the dislike of womanish castrates. The Phrygian priests were not seen as descendants of noble Trojan forefathers but as

(Indianapolis: Hackett, 2004)). Cf. the status of eunuchs in the legal texts of Late Antiquity; the jurist Paulus believed that anyone castrating another person should be punished by death, and the jurist Ulpian thought that the same relates to those who castrate themselves or consent to this procedure. Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch*, pp. 32–33.

¹⁸ Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, 2. 629–32; Catullus, *Carmen*, 63. 5–7, 63. 17; Ovidius, *Fasti*, 4. 221–44; Propertius, *Elegiae*, 2. 22. 15; Seneca, *Agamemnon*, 686–90; *De vita beata*, 26. 8; Valerius Flaccus, *Argonautica*, 8. 232; Statius, *Thebais*, 10. 170–73, 12. 226–27; Martialis, *Epigrammata*, 11. 84; Juvenalis, *Saturae*, 2. 116.

¹⁹ Catullus, *Carmen*, 63. 8–12, 63. 27, 63. 60–62, 63. 68–69, 63. 74, 63. 90; Varro, *Eumenides*, frs. 119–20, 132; *Anthologia Palatina*, 7. 222. 1–2; Vergilius, *Aeneis*, 4. 215, 9. 614–20; Ovidius, *Fasti*, 4. 243; Seneca, *Agamemnon*, 686; Martialis, *Epigrammata*, 5. 41.

²⁰ Catullus, *Carmen*, 63. 4, 63. 38, 63. 44, 63. 57, 63. 78–79, 63. 89, 63. 92–93; Ovidius, *Fasti*, 4. 233–36, 4. 243–44, 4. 363–66; Seneca, *Agamemnon*, 690; Statius, *Thebais*, 10. 161–69, 10. 170–75; Martialis, *Epigrammata*, 5. 41, 11. 84; Juvenalis, *Saturae*, 2. 112; cf. Juvenalis, *Saturae*, 5. 24–25.

²¹ Martialis, *Epigrammata*, 3. 81; Juvenalis, *Saturae*, 2. 111–16; *Anthologia Palatina*, 7. 222. 5; Horatius, *Saturae*, 1. 2. 120–22. Apparently the manner and timing (before or after puberty) of the castration would have affected the sexual desires and prowess of the eunuch. Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch*, pp. 33–35, 97–98.

²² See esp. Catullus, *Carmen*, 63; Varro, *Eumenides*, fr. 133; Valerius Maximus, *Facta et dicta memorabilia*, 7. 7. 6. This reaction can also be read in the reception that Battakes, a priest of Cybele, received when he arrived from the Phrygian sanctuary of Pessinus to Rome carrying a message to the Senate. His royal garments and headdress, however, provoked the plebeian tribune to be disrespectful of him and to prevent him from addressing the people. The sexual status of the priest is not commented on. Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 36. 13; Plutarchus, *Marius*, 17. 5–6.

²³ Not all the Cybele's priests were emasculated *galli*; there were also priests and priestesses called *sacerdotes* along with other cult officials. The number of the actual castrates among them remains a mystery. See, e.g., Beard, 'The Roman and the Foreign', pp. 173–74.

despicable half-men. So strong was the association between eunuch priests and Phrygians in Augustan Rome that Vergil needed to adjust his description of the venerable Aeneas and his companions to correspond with this image.²⁴

Likewise, we should be critical of the strict division made by Dionysius. Although some scholars have followed his views about the Roman and the Phrygian facets of the cult,²⁵ the Romans basically accommodated the cult in order to meet their needs.²⁶ It is hard to imagine that the Romans could have been imposed on to accept cultic features they did not agree with, or that the orgiastic side of the cult with its eunuch priests would have come as a surprise for them.²⁷ Instead the Romans merely externalized anything strange and unusual about the cult by projecting it on the already existing others within the cult, that is, the Phrygians. This externalization did not mean that the ecstatic rituals would have only interested — or served the interests of — the foreign population but it allowed the Romans to maintain their idealized self-image of sobermindedness and austerity, so vigorously also promoted by Dionysius. Further, it is worth recalling that although some aspects of the cult, such as the eunuch priests, were eagerly decried in literature, they were never banned. Instead, they were integrated into Roman religious practices. Thereby, there were no separate 'Roman' rituals and 'Phrygian' rituals but all were equally Roman. This can be attested, for example, by the prominent way that the *galli* paraded through the streets performing their frenzied rituals as a part of the *pompa*, which, in turn, was an essentially Roman way of celebrating.

All in all, when we consider the image of the cult before the mid-second century CE, we can see that the reception was sharply divided. On the one hand, the elite were jostling to express their commitment to the cult. The entire city with its best man and woman hurried to welcome the goddess as she came ashore, their minds

²⁴ Compare Roller, *In Search of God the Mother*, p. 303; Maria Grazia Lancellotti, *Attis: Between Myth and History; King, Priest and God* (Leiden: Brill 2002), p. 102.

²⁵ For example, Borgeaud, *Mother of the Gods*, pp. 62–65; Thomas, 'Magna Mater and Attis', pp. 1504, 1507, 1517–18; Bömer, 'Kybele in Rom', pp. 133–38; Vermaseren, *Cybele and Attis*, p. 96. See also the discussion in Beard, 'The Roman and the Foreign', pp. 182–87.

²⁶ As Roller, *In Search of God the Mother*, pp. 309, 319, points out, there was clearly also a demand for a channel to express oneself outside the conventional gender roles. Cf. Beard, 'The Roman and the Foreign', p. 179.

²⁷ The Romans went through a careful disquisition before the adoption of any new cults, and the Romans were no 'buffoons', as Takács, 'Magna Deum Mater Idaea', p. 373, puts it. On the interpretation that the Romans got more than they bargained for, see, e.g., Bömer, 'Kybele in Rom', p. 138; Thomas, 'Magna Mater and Attis', pp. 1504, 1507; Vermaseren, *Cybele and Attis*, p. 96.

uplifted and hopeful.²⁸ The writers praised her powers and perpetual assistance to the Romans and their ancestors. The military leaders relied on her support, as she had freed Italy from the Carthaginians and, with the mural crown on her head, she protected the city.²⁹ Even emperors did not hesitate to embrace the cult. Augustus and his family wanted to be associated with the goddess and early Rome, and he brought the cult under imperial control; in addition, Cybele featured in Augustan literature. Emperor Claudius, in turn, exploited the fame Claudia Quinta had brought to the *gens* Claudia.³⁰

On the other hand, the figure of the eunuch priest came to symbolize the overall otherness inherent in the cult to the degree that a *gallus* could be used to explore total alienation from the customary social and cultural sphere, as Catullus does in his poem.³¹ The eunuch priests serving one of the vital Roman deities had brought the 'others' to the heart of the religious life.

Devoted Adorers: Pagan Images of the Cult of Cybele in Late Antiquity

By the end of the second century, Christians had become a party to be reckoned with in the discussion on proper religious conduct. This also forced the adherents of the traditional cults to adjust their manner of writing and to sharpen their argumentation little by little.

Lucian of Samosata and Apuleius, both writing around the mid-second century and shortly after that, continue to employ the image of unmanly eunuch priests. In his account *De syria dea*, Lucian finds many points of comparison between Cybele and the Syrian goddess, not the least their fondness for eunuch priests. According to a wise man, Lucian says, these two are, in fact, the same. The story goes that when Cybele castrated her beloved Attis, he ceased to be a man and began

²⁸ Livius, *Ab urbe condita*, 29. 14. 13; Silius Italicus, *Punica*, 17. 46–47.

²⁹ Cicero, *De haruspicum responsis*, 13. 28; Valerius Maximus, *Facta et dicta memorabilia*, 1. 1. 1 c; cf. Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, 2. 641–43. On *Mater turrita*, see Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, 2. 606–07; Vergilius, *Aeneis*, 6. 785, 10. 253; Propertius, *Elegiae*, 4. 11. 52; Ovidius, *Fasti*, 4. 219–21; Ovidius, *Metamorphoses*, 10. 696; Seneca, *Agamemnon*, 688.

³⁰ Vermaseren, *Cybele and Attis*, pp. 41–42, 86; Roller, *In Search of God the Mother*, pp. 309, 313–15. Since the *galli* resided in the temple on the Palatine they were virtually next door to the emperors. Beard, 'The Roman and the Foreign', pp. 181–82.

³¹ Catullus, *Carmen*, 63. See the comments in Roller, 'The Ideology of the Eunuch Priest', pp. 127–28.

to wear women's clothing. This half-woman Attis travelled around performing secret rites and praising the goddess. Since neither him nor his orgies were accepted beyond the Euphrates, he established a sanctuary in Syria where the *galli* castrate themselves in imitation of him.³² In Apuleius's *Metamorphoses*, as well, the eunuch priest of the Syrian goddess finds it natural to appeal to Cybele along with his mistress.³³ The golden goblet that the priests are caught stealing also originated from the temple of Cybele, and, in their defence, the priests insist that the cup was a gift from one sister goddess to another.³⁴

Apuleius depicts the eunuch priests of the Syrian goddess as despicable, womanish, crooks, and hustlers. They dress, very much like Cybele's *galli*, in multicoloured robes and turbans and they wear layers of make-up on their faces. According to Apuleius, the priests toured around the countryside putting up shows of shrieking, whirling of their heads and locks, lacerating their arms and whipping themselves, and imitating divine possession in order to collect money from the wealthy farmers. They provided false prophecies to attain what they desired, and they greedily accepted any donations. The most graphic description, however, is the one Apuleius gives of their perverse lasciviousness. The eunuchs brought a sturdy young peasant to their banquet, and as one they assaulted the poor fellow driven by their monstrous lust.³⁵ Although the description resembles the earlier portrayals of Cybele's *galli*,³⁶ Apuleius does not directly connect them with each other.

In *Alexander the False Prophet*, Lucian also mentions the worshippers of Cybele in connection with a questionable priestly figure, as he compares their way of

³² Lucianus, *De Syria dea*, 15. Cf. *ibid.*, 32. Otherwise in Lucian's account the figure of Attis is replaced by a eunuch named Kombabos. To imitate him, or to celebrate the Syrian goddess Atargatis, men castrate themselves, become women, and take on women's chores. The story of Kombabos also explains why *galli* wear women's clothing. Once a woman fell desperately in love with the fair-looking eunuch, not knowing that he was marred; after finding out the truth the woman killed herself. To stop this from ever happening again Kombabos clad himself with female garments. *Ibid.*, 27. Yet, in another passage Lucian makes taunts about the 'sacred love' that exists between these eunuchs and women: women lust after the emasculates who, in turn, crave women. And this makes nobody jealous. *Ibid.*, 22.

³³ Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, 8. 25.

³⁴ Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, 9. 9–10.

³⁵ Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, 8. 27–29.

³⁶ The priests are called girls or they are referred to using feminine forms; they also have effeminate, broken voices, and they are portrayed as prone to debauchery. Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, 8. 25–26.

conducting themselves,³⁷ but the most direct allusion to their unacceptability is made in the *Saturnalia*. There Lucian's Cronus threatens that he will transform anyone disobeying his laws into eunuchs and mendicant priests of Cybele.³⁸ Otherwise, Lucian finds the love affair between Cybele and Attis laughable. It is not appropriate for the mother of so many gods to be dallying with a young boy at her age — love has made the goddess as mad as her worshippers.³⁹ Lucian also wonders how suspicious characters like Attis or Corybants, the companions of Cybele, have been uplifted to the rank of gods.⁴⁰

These remain virtually the last descriptions of Cybele's eunuch priests in non-Christian literature that embody the earlier negative image described in the previous section. Even then, observations are often made in passing, and, partly, the sharpest critique can be attributed to the demands of the satirical genre. The unmanly *galli*, the subject dominating the depictions of the cult of Cybele for nearly two hundred years, suddenly disappear. And when they are mentioned incidentally, even their most horrid feature in the eyes of Romans, castration, can be understood as a token of purity or chastity.⁴¹ In Emperor Julian's philosophical discussion on the Mother of gods, a metaphorical interpretation for castration is offered; he understands it as the gods' exhortation to give up all that is excess in ourselves and thus strive for the divine.⁴²

We find yet another reference to the emasculation in honour of Cybele in the *Epitome de caesaribus*. The author describes how the unpopular emperor Heliogabalus indulged in every kind of debauchery upon his arrival in Rome. He wanted to be called by the feminine name Bassiana, he wedded a Vestal Virgin, and, after

³⁷ Lucianus, *Alexander*, 13.

³⁸ Lucianus, *Saturnalia*, 12.

³⁹ Lucianus, *Dialogi deorum*, 20. 1–2; *De sacrificiis*, 7.

⁴⁰ Lucianus, *Deorum concilium*, 9; *Icaromenippus*, 27.

⁴¹ Servius in his commentary on Vergil's *Aeneid* 9. 115, written around 400, offers a version of the story of Cybele and her young beloved Attis. However, in his account Attis is a devoted minister in charge of the goddess's rites. The beauty of the youngster has attracted the unwanted attention of the king of the town, whose advances Attis escapes to the woods to avoid. There, after being violated by the king, Attis castrates him, and the king, in turn, emasculates Attis. Thus, Cybele's priest becomes castrated, not by his own hand, but as a result of his desire to remain unblemished. Cf. Lucianus, *De Syria dea*, 27.

⁴² Julian interprets castration as the cessation or checking of the limitlessness of Attis, who in his turn is interpreted as the generative power containing the forms and causes of material beings. Julianus, *Oratio*, 5. 168 d, 5. 169 c, 5. 171 d, 5. 174 c, 5. 175 b, 5. 179 c.

castrating himself, he devoted himself to the Great Mother.⁴³ In this case as well we can read that the real error is not in the cultic procedure but in Heliogabalus's distorted conduct. Just as his marriage to a Vestal Virgin was a mockery of the Roman religion, his self-castration does not do justice to the cult of Cybele; it is almost as if his emasculation was an end in itself, his devotion to the goddess merely coincidental.

At the same time, however, we can see that, in general, the negative image of the eunuch priests and eunuchs prevails. For example, this is evident in Apuleius's *Metamorphoses* where the target has shifted to the priests of the Syrian goddess. As another example we can take the *Against Eutropius* of Claudian, written in 399. Claudian attacks Eutropius, a eunuch and former slave, who was the grand chamberlain of the eastern Roman Emperor Arcadius, who appointed him as the first eunuch consul in 399. The cutting edge of Claudian's assault lies in the effeminacy and subservience created by Eutropius's emasculation. References to his unmanliness occur throughout the poem: he is called eunuch, emasculate, half-man, effeminate, sterile, and old woman; his voice is described as tremulous and womanish.⁴⁴ Echoing the views of Valerius Maximus, Claudian announces that eunuchs are not counted in either sex.⁴⁵ Even a woman would have made a better consul since they are able to bear children; Eutropius's only affection is for money.⁴⁶ Many allusions to his perverse lustfulness and skills are made.⁴⁷ As the personified goddess Rome states, the eunuchs are suitable for ruling the effeminate East, but this

⁴³ Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *Epitome de caesaribus*, 23. 3 (Sexti Aurelii Victoris Liber de Caesaribus, *Origo gentis Romanae et Liber de viris illustribus urbis Romae, subsequitur Epitome de Caesaribus*, ed. by Franciscus Pichlmayr (Leipzig: Teubner, 1911)): 'Suo abscisique genitalibus Matri se Magnae sacravit' (and, after cutting off his genitals, he dedicated himself to the Great Mother). See also *SHA, Heliogabalus*, 3. 4 on the almost sacrilegious treatment of these old Roman cults at the hands of Heliogabalus.

⁴⁴ For example, Claudianus, *In Eutropium*, 1. 8, 1. 10, 1. 171, 1. 187, 1. 252, 1. 261–63, 1. 296, 1. 319, 1. 324, 1. 419, 1. 462, 1. 494, 1. 496–97. For more detail, see Jacqueline Long, *Claudian's 'In Eutropium', Or, How, When and Why to Slander a Eunuch* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), pp. 107, 109–23, 125–29, 131.

⁴⁵ Claudianus, *In Eutropium*, 1. 467 (*Claudian in Two Volumes*, I, edn with trans. by Maurice Platnauer, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1922)): 'alter quos pepulit sexus nec suscipit alter' ('you whom the male sex has discarded and the female sex will not adopt').

⁴⁶ Claudian also reminds his audience of barbarian queens and the heroic deeds of women. Claudianus, *In Eutropium*, 1. 187–93, 320–24, 330–36.

⁴⁷ Claudianus, *In Eutropium*, 1. 77–80, 1. 100–02, 1. 358–70. See also Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch*, pp. 98–100.

pollution should stay away from manly and militant Italy.⁴⁸ In general, eunuchs are made for servitude and they are always unholy.⁴⁹

Only a few lines in the poem reveal that Claudian may also have had the *galli* on his mind when putting down the eunuchs. On several occasions Claudian belittles the military abilities of Eutropius; this is no surprise since in the Roman discourse militarism was closely linked with manliness and masculine virtues.⁵⁰ Thus, Claudian advises Eutropius to change his allegiance from Mars to Cybele — the eunuch should leave the arms to men and join the revel-band of mad Corybants, slashing the remains of his manhood with Phrygian knives.⁵¹ Except for this short display of deprecation Claudian's treatment of Cybele elsewhere is generally respectful.⁵²

So, to what can we attribute this disappearance of the *galli* from pagan sources? I am not convinced that it is merely a matter of survival of the texts; many writings concerning the cult of Cybele have been preserved, but they do not address the contemporary problem (if indeed it was such) of the eunuch priests. And even though the Christian writers tended to seek their references to pagan cults from earlier literature, such as Varro, one might think that a contemporary expression of disapproval from the pagan side would have offered an easy target for Christian

⁴⁸ Claudianus, *In Eutropium*, 1. 427–32.

⁴⁹ Claudianus, *In Eutropium*, 1. 330, 1. 332.

⁵⁰ However, in Late Antiquity these ideals were increasingly at odds with reality: the Roman elite was retreating from warfare while soldiers were being recruited among non-Romans, and, as shown by Eutropius, even eunuchs had entered military life. Constant military crises were not only questioning the potency of the Roman army but also the manliness of Roman men. In general, see Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch*, pp. 37–45; on Eutropius in particular, see *ibid.*, pp. 66–67.

⁵¹ Claudianus, *In Eutropium*, 1. 277–81.

⁵² In *The War against Gildo* (Claudianus, *De bello Gildonico*, 113–30), Rome in goddess form invokes Cybele's long history in the city and implores her aid in the war. In the second poem *Against Eutropius* (Claudianus, *In Eutropium*, 2. 279–303), Cybele foresees and mourns the fall of her beloved homeland Phrygia at the hands of the enemy because of Eutropius. Finally, in the *Rape of Proserpine* (Claudianus, *De raptu Proserpinae*, 33. 202–13) Cybele is again presented in her Phrygian setting: her temple in the dense Idaean grove with the lions and raging Corybants with their drums and knives offer hospitality to Ceres, unaware of the plot to seize her daughter. Cf. also the image of Cybele as a nurturing mother and helper in Nonnus's *Dionysiaca* of the same period. The lions and dancing and noise-making Corybants are again an inseparable part of the Phrygian locale. Nonnus, *Dionysiaca*, 9. 145–48, 9. 160–68, 9. 177–81, 9. 220–26, 12. 380–81, 12. 394–97, 13. 8–15, 14. 25–26, 14. 280, 29. 215–21. Even the womanish, self-castrated Attis acts as a respectable messenger of Cybele. *Ibid.*, 25. 310–20, 25. 325–38, 25. 351–61, 25. 368–79.

criticism. One reason for the invisibility may be that the eunuch priests were not such a burning issue anymore. Their numbers may have declined or their public role lost its ostentatious edge.⁵³

In my opinion the most sustainable explanation for the hostile reactions against the *galli* in the first place is the challenge they posed to the social hierarchies: foreigners and genderless beings were able to rise to the top of the priestly rank, which traditionally had been the exclusive right of the aristocratic Roman men and women; they also questioned the elite's monopoly on the divine by claiming that they could offer direct access to the gods by the means of ecstasy.⁵⁴ However, the overall rise of the eunuchs in high political positions in Late Antiquity may have resulted in a situation where the eunuch priests serving one of the major deities were no longer the sole — or even worst — cause for concern and anxiety.⁵⁵ Eutropius and his kind were more likely to rouse vehement hostility than the priests of a cult by now regarded as ancient.⁵⁶

⁵³ Cf. Roller, *In Search of God the Mother*, pp. 292, 303–04, according to whom the frequent references to *galli* after the long silence following the introduction of the cult are a consequence of a more prominent role of the priests. However, the public display of *galli* was still gaudy enough to irritate the church father Augustine in the early fifth century. Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, 7. 26. On the disappearance of the *galli*, see also *ibid.*, 7. 26, and the next section.

⁵⁴ Beard, 'The Roman and the Foreign', p. 178; Roller, *In Search of God the Mother*, p. 319; cf. Keith Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, vol. I of *Sociological Studies in Roman History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. 195.

⁵⁵ Keith Hopkins states that the court eunuchs ranked among the highest elite, they enjoyed proximity *sui generis* to the emperor which allowed them to exercise considerable power and collect substantial wealth — all of which was likely to elicit jealousy and hostility. Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, pp. 172–80. He explains the prominence of eunuchs in Late Antiquity by the demands of the current power structures: in order to secure their autocracy, the emperors became increasingly isolated from the other power blocks. Hence, there was a need for intermediaries between the emperor and other power elements, and the eunuchs, who were socially distinguishable and totally dependent on the emperor's benevolence, were suitable — if even irreplaceable — for the task, yet they were expendable as individuals. Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, pp. 181–92. On the multitude of eunuchs in the Constantinian court, see David S. Potter, *The Roman Empire at Bay: AD 180–395* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 477.

⁵⁶ On the hostility towards eunuchs in high positions, see, e.g., Ammianus's description of the misdeeds of another eunuch grand chamberlain, Eusebius. Eusebius and the other royal eunuchs are portrayed as greedy for power, cruel, and scheming. Ammianus announces his own distaste for eunuchs and says that even in small numbers they are hard to bear. Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 14. 11. 3, 15. 3. 2, 18. 4. 4–5, 22. 3. 12. Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch*, pp. 67–68.

Another explanation may be directly related to the debate on the proper religion between the adherents of the traditional cults and the Christians. For those pagans writing about the cult of Cybele it may have been well advised to keep quiet about the *galli* — as Augustine comments on Varro's silence over Attis. Attis and his mythical castration might be interpreted allegorically, but the real-life frenzy and lacerations of the *galli* went beyond all rational explanation. However, since this argument relies on the absence of references, it remains tentative.

If the *galli* no longer were a current issue in the late Roman pagan literature, what kind of image of the cult did the non-Christian authors want to produce? Some attention was directed at looking back to the glorious beginnings of the cult in Rome. Appian, when writing his account of the Hannibalic War, gives a detailed description of the arrival of the cult and the role of Claudia Quinta and Scipio Nasica.⁵⁷ Cassius Dio also notes in his *Roman History* that the best of the citizens were assigned to welcome the cult.⁵⁸ In Herodian's *Roman History*, the introduction of the cult is also retold at length, since, as he points out, some Greeks may be unaware of the history. In Herodian's version, Claudia Quinta, the matron, has given way to a Vestal Virgin, which binds the cult even more closely to the foundations of the civic life, thus emphasizing its legitimacy.⁵⁹

In addition to the stories of origins, the Phrygianness associated with the cult and especially its inspired rites comes up in the second-century literature. Lucian refers to the Phrygian, Lydian, and Samothracean rites of Cybele, which the Eastern peoples had learnt directly from Attis.⁶⁰ Likewise, in the *Affairs of the Heart*, the initiations and mysteries of the 'Phrygian deity', honouring the unfortunate love-affair of the goddess and her beloved shepherd-boy, are described as suspicious and harmful to the women celebrating them.⁶¹ Arrian states that the mourning rituals of Attis in Rome follow the Phrygian custom.⁶² On the other hand, in the account of Emperor Julian, the Phrygians appear again as the venerable forefathers who — together with the tasteful Athenians — guarantee the antiquity of the cult.⁶³

⁵⁷ Appianus, *Hannibalica*, 7. 9. 56.

⁵⁸ Cassius Dio, *Historia Romana*, 17. 61. See also Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *De viris illustribus*, 46. 1–3.

⁵⁹ Herodianus, *Ab excessu divi Marci*, 1. 11. 1–5. Beard, 'The Roman and the Foreign', p. 179. See also Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *De viris illustribus*, 46. 2; Julianus, *Oratio*, 5. 160 b.

⁶⁰ Lucianus, *De Syria dea*, 15. See also Lucianus, *Tragoedopodagra*, 30–35.

⁶¹ Pseudo-Lucianus, *Amores*, 42.

⁶² Arrianus, *Tactica*, 33. 4.

⁶³ Julianus, *Oratio*, 5. 159 a.

The cult of Cybele had become one of the bones of contention in the religious discussion of Late Antiquity: the Christian side was keen on condemning it as the devil's plot whereas the pagan elite was eager to show their devotion to the long-standing Roman goddess. Especially the aforementioned Emperor Julian (360–63) must be named as a devout supporter of the traditional cults. Raised a Christian, Julian became an ardent advocate of what he called Hellenism, that is, the traditional religion and wisdom. After a line of Christian emperors he tried to turn the tide and restore the old Roman cults. In his attempt to subdue the Christians he was ready to grant favours to the Jews although his own interests lay mainly, on the one hand, in theurgic philosophy and, on the other hand, in sacrificial and mystery cults, several of which he was initiated into; the Sun god (usually identified as Mithras) and Cybele were especially close to his heart.⁶⁴

The historian Ammianus Marcellinus's account bears witness to Julian's special interest towards Cybele. He describes how Julian made it his business to visit Pessinus, the native soil of Cybele, and to approach the goddess with sacrifices and vows there.⁶⁵ Even on his military campaign, Julian found time to celebrate the annual festival of the goddess, which filled him with peace and confidence.⁶⁶ Julian himself was also proud to declare his devotion and gratitude to the goddess.⁶⁷ His interest in the Neoplatonic philosophy led him to construct a detailed allegorical interpretation of Cybele and Attis which he introduces in his hymn *To the Mother of Gods*. Apparently, the Neoplatonic philosopher Porphyry had already compiled a similar interpretation, and Julian was also followed by his friend and adviser Sallustius with an almost identical treatise. In addition, at the turn of the fifth century, Macrobius offered in his *Saturnalia* an allegorical explanation of Cybele and Attis as the earth and the sun.⁶⁸ The purpose of these writings was, at least in part,

⁶⁴ On Julian's religious politics, see, e.g., Potter, *The Roman Empire*, pp. 508–14; David Rokeah, *Jews, Pagans and Christians in Conflict* (Leiden: Brill, 1982), pp. 33–36; in general, see Rowland B. E. Smith, *Julian's Gods: Religion and Philosophy in the Thought and Action of Julian the Apostate* (London: Routledge, 1995), esp. pp. 91, 110–16, 130–38, 160–62, 167–218.

⁶⁵ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 22. 9. 5; 22. 9. 8.

⁶⁶ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 22. 3. 7.

⁶⁷ Julianus, *Oratio*, 5, esp. 5. 166 a–b, 5. 174 c, 5. 179 d–180 c. See also Smith, *Julian's Gods*, pp. 171–72.

⁶⁸ Julianus, *Oratio*, 5; Sallustius, *De diis et mundo*, 4; the treatise of Porphyry is mentioned by Julian (*Oratio*, 5. 161c) and criticized by Eusebius (*Praeparatio evangelica*, 3. 11) and Augustine (*De civitate Dei*, 7. 25); Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, 1. 21. 7–10. According to Marinus's *Vita Procli* (33), the Neoplatonist Proclus even wrote an inspired theology of the cult in the fifth century.

to respond to the Christian attacks against what they considered to be ludicrous and shameful fables; therefore, these writings can be considered apologetic.⁶⁹

The short-lived Emperor Julian was not the only one to utilize the cult of Cybele in his struggle on behalf of the traditional religion. In the fourth century the non-Christian Roman elite were proclaiming their beliefs through several different cults, often with mystic aspects and rituals. The same person could be initiated into a number of different mysteries and hold more than one religious office. Especially the aristocratic opposition to Christianity was eager to practise a ritual called *taurobolium*.⁷⁰ *Taurobolium* and *criobolium* were specific sacrifices of, respectively, a bull and a ram, and from the time of Emperor Antoninus Pius to the end of the fourth century epigraphical material connects them to the cult of Cybele. As is evident from the inscriptions on the commemorative altars, *taurobolium* was originally performed for the well-being of the emperor or the city,⁷¹ but it slowly evolved into a personal mystery initiation of the participant who thus became *tauroboliatus*. This may have been a substitutive ritual for the self-emasculation of

⁶⁹ Rokeah, *Jews, Pagans and Christians*, pp. 116–17. Allegorical interpretations of Greek mythology were already made by the Stoics in pre-Christian times, and the Neoplatonists carried on the tradition. Ibid., pp. 94–95. Earlier allegorical interpretations of the cult include Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, 2. 598–660; Varro in Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, 7. 24. On the Christian approaches to allegorical interpretations, see the next section.

⁷⁰ For example, senator Ulpius Egnatius Faventinus was a public augur, Father, and sacred herald (*pater et hieroceryx*) of Mithras, supreme shepherd of Liber (*archibucolus*), hierophant of Hecate, priest (*sacerdos*) of Isis, and he had undergone both *taurobolium* and *criobolium* (*Corpus cultus Cybelae Attidisque*, ed. by Maarten J. Vermaseren, *Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'Empire romain* 50, 7 vols (Leiden: Brill, 1977–89) [hereafter *CCCA*], III, 233) and a woman called Serapias was a priestess (*sacerdos*) of the Mother of gods and of Proserpina (*CCCA*, III, 235). The most famous example, however, is probably senator Vettius Agorius Praetextatus whose religious merits are listed as follows: augur, pontiff (*pontifex*) of Vesta and of the Sun, *quindecimvir*, curial priest (*curialis*) of Hercules, consecrated (*sacrat*) to Liber and in the Eleusinian mysteries, priest of Hecate (*hierophanta*), temple warden of Serapis (*neocorus*), and *tauroboliatus*; his wife Aconia Fabia Paulina was also consecrated to Ceres at Eleusis and to Hecate at Aegina, had undergone the *taurobolium* ritual, and was a priestess of Hecate (*hierophantia*). *ILS*, 1259. Cf. *ILS*, 1260 on Paulina. See also Smith, *Julian's Gods*, pp. 172–75.

⁷¹ For example, *CCCA*, v, 386. 4–7: 'pro salute imperatoris Caes(aris) T(iti) Aeli | Hadriani Antonini Aug(usti) Pii p(atris) p(atriciae) | liberorumque eius | et status coloniae Lugudun(ensium)' (for the well-being of Emperor Caesar Titus Aelius Hadrianus Antoninus Augustus Pius, father of the fatherland, and of his children, and for the prosperity of the colony of Lugdunum).

the *galli* and also a kind of equivalent to the Christian baptism and the transformed status accomplished through it.⁷²

Finally, we can see that — consciously or not — the cult was developing characteristics that were in accordance with the Christian practices.⁷³ In the third or fourth century a day called *Hilaria*, a festival of joy, was added to the ritual cycle of March commemorating the mythical tale of Attis; it was possible that this day, at least for some people, marked the resurrection of Attis.⁷⁴ Those initiated into the secret mysteries or those who had undergone the *taurobolium* ritual may have also hoped for ‘salvation’.⁷⁵

⁷² See, e.g., Vermaseren, *Cybele and Attis*, pp. 46–51, 105–07 with references; Giulia Sfameni Gasparro, *Soteriology and Mystic Aspects in the Cult of Cybele and Attis* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), pp. 107–18; Neil McLynn, ‘The Fourth-Century *Taurobolium*’, *Phoenix*, 50 (1996), 312–30 (pp. 321–28); Lancellotti, *Attis*, pp. 110–15, 163–64; and the discussion in Borgeaud, *Mother of the Gods*, pp. 110–14 with references to earlier literature.

⁷³ The question is mainly whether it was a direct influence of the popularity of Christianity or the convergent demand from the populace that made the cult evolve in the same direction. See A. T. Fear, ‘Cybele and Christ’, in *Cybele, Attis and Related Cults*, ed. by Lane, pp. 37–50 (pp. 41–45); Borgeaud, *Mother of the Gods*, p. 94. Fear sees that the cult of Cybele, combining esoteric and mystical features to the undisputable ancient Roman nature, was an attractive choice for the advocates of paganism, and he supports the view that the changes were self-conscious and caused the violent reactions from the Christian side. Fear concludes (‘Cybele and Christ’, p. 50): ‘By adopting a more Eastern version of the cult than had been previously current at Rome in order to challenge Christianity, it laid itself open to a counter-attack by Christian writers on precisely the traditionalist Roman grounds its adherents believed themselves to be defending in the first place.’

⁷⁴ Julianus, *Oratio*, 5. 169 d; Sallustius, *De diis et mundo*, 4. 10; Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, 1. 21. 10; Damascius, *Vita Isidori*, fr. 131 (Zintzen). Borgeaud, *Mother of the Gods*, p. 93; Sfameni Gasparro, *Soteriology*, pp. 57–60.

⁷⁵ Salvation presumably marks here a more profound transformation of the person’s status in the afterlife than was imagined in the traditional mystery initiations such as the Eleusinian mysteries. Damascius, *Vita Isidori*, fr. 131 (Zintzen); *CCCA*, III, 242 (Sextilius Agesilaus Aedesius): ‘taurobolio | criobolioq(ue) in aeter|num renatus’ (through *taurobolium* and *criobolium* born again eternally); Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 3. 1–3; cf. *ibid.*, 22. 1–4 on the unwitnessed resurrection and the false hope of salvation in the mysteries of (presumably) Osiris, and Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, 7. 24, 26. Vermaseren, *Cybele and Attis*, pp. 116–21 with references; Sfameni Gasparro, *Soteriology*, pp. 61–62, 100–02, 104–06, 111–14. The identification of the mysteries Firmicus Maternus is referring to (*De errore profanarum religionum*, 22) has been between Osiris and Attis. Jean Pépin, ‘Réactions du christianisme latin à la sotériologie métroaque: Firmicus Maternus, Ambrosiaster, Saint Augustin’, in *La sotériologia dei culti orientali nell’impero Romano*, ed. by Ugo Bianchi and Maarten J. Vermaseren, *Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l’Empire romain*, 92 (Leiden: Brill, 1982), pp. 256–72 (p. 258), and the discussion pp. 272–73; Sfameni Gasparro, *Soteriology*, p. 85 and n. 3.

All in all we can say that the non-Christian authors of Late Antiquity present the cult of Cybele in an increasingly positive light, or more precisely, towards the end of the fourth century, as acceptable in the current ideological climate. The two main features relating to this are, firstly, the emphasis on the traditional, Roman, nature of the cult and, secondly, the rationalization or redirection of mythology. The traditionality of the cult is reflected in the retelling of the introduction of the cult and the many legends entwined with it; the transformation of Claudia Quinta from a matron to a Vestal Virgin further enhanced the connection with Roman antiquity. The importance of this inclusion among proper observances is also reflected in the Christian critiques.⁷⁶ The festivals of Cybele and Attis are presented as an integral part of the Roman life.⁷⁷ After the second century, the alleged Phrygianness of certain rituals is no longer commented on.

The attempt to make the mythology related to Cybele (and Attis in particular) more presentable can be seen especially in the allegorical interpretations. Allegories were constructed to explain the myths that the Christians considered to be shameful and ridiculous, such as the infatuation of Cybele with the young shepherd, or the castration of Attis; these were becoming something of an embarrassment for the pagan intellectuals.⁷⁸ Instead, the positive legends were highlighted; in particular, this meant the repetition of the story of how the goddess proved the chastity of Claudia Quinta.⁷⁹ The central role that Nonnus assigns to Cybele throughout his account of Dionysus's life could also be interpreted as an effort to incorporate Cybele into a less suspicious mythical cycle. Mostly the authors drew a veil over the

⁷⁶ On the introduction of the cult, see Appianus, *Hanniballica*, 7. 9. 56; Cassius Dio, *Historia Romana*, 17. 61; Herodianus, *Ab excessu divi Marci*, 1. 11. 1–5; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *De viris illustribus*, 46. 1–3; Julianus, *Oratio*, 5. 159 c–161 a. On Claudia as a Vestal, see Herodianus, *Ab excessu divi Marci*, 1. 11. 4; Pseudo-Aurelius Victor, *De viris illustribus*, 46. 2; Julianus, *Oratio*, 5. 160 b. Cf. above, note 6. On the Christian responses, see the next section.

⁷⁷ Herodianus, *Ab excessu divi Marci*, 1. 10. 5–6; Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 22. 3. 7; Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*, 17. 2. 11; Cassius Dio, *Historia Romana*, 37. 8; *SHA*, *Severus Alexander*, 37. 6; *Aurelianus*, 1. 1.

⁷⁸ Julian's allegorical interpretation for castration is discussed above, but the Emperor also wanted to stress that the goddess's love for Attis was without any passion and she was, in fact, a virgin. Julianus, *Oratio*, 5. 166 a–b. Julian begins his allegory by conceding that some consider even the story of Claudia Quinta to be implausible and not fitting for a philosopher or a theologian (5. 161 b). The apologetic nature of the image is also present at the introduction legend. Julian emphasizes that the miracle performed by the goddess proves that the Romans did not bring a mere lifeless image but a truly divine being of supernatural powers (5. 160 a, 161 a).

⁷⁹ Also the pagan in Minucius Felix's *Octavius* (7. 3) appeals to this.

subject of the eunuch priest, and in Emperor Julian's allegory even castration was translated into something holy and wise.⁸⁰

Vehement Adversaries: Christian Images of the Cult

As popular as the cult of Cybele was among the pagan intelligentsia of Late Antiquity, it was just as infamous among their Christian opponents. On the one hand the popularity of the cult made it a *necessary* target for Christian criticism, but on the other hand the conspicuous features that had already puzzled the Romans for centuries also made it an *easy* target for condemnation. In addition, many similarities between the cult beliefs and Christian teachings needed an explanation — if not for apologetic reasons at least for the purpose of providing answers inside the Christian circuits.

Above all, the Christian elite trumpeted their outrage at the alleged obscenity and the shamefulness of Cybele's myths and rituals. In the early Christian critique, the validity of the goddess was not questioned so much as the manner of her worship which was deemed improper and erroneous. For example, the habit of begging for the goddess, which was practised by Cybele's priests during the spring festival, and which was barely tolerated by the republican and Augustan writers themselves,⁸¹ was strongly disapproved of by the Christian writers. Clement of Alexandria finds his points of reference from Greek comedy, which according to him, manages to catch the truth and presents some convincing arguments. He quotes Menander and Antisthenes who had already criticized the begging priests carrying the image of the goddess along the streets and claiming to be able to summon her with the din of their instruments. Clement agrees that it is a god's business to nourish humans, not the other way around, and it is absurd to believe that a cymbal could force the god to appear when called.⁸² Minucius Felix echoes these views as he mentions begging for the gods as one of the perverse rites.⁸³ Origen contradicts

⁸⁰ Julianus, *Oratio*, 5. 168 d, 5. 179 c.

⁸¹ See Cicero, *De legibus*, 2. 22, 2. 40; Ovidius, *Fasti*, 4. 350–52; Dionysius Halicarnassus, *Antiquitates Romanae*, 2. 19. 4.

⁸² Clemens Alexandrinus, *Protrepticus*, 7. 64.

⁸³ Minucius Felix, *Octavius*, 22. 8 (Tertullian, *Apology*; *De spectaculis*, and Minucius Felix, *Octavius*, edn with trans. by T. R. Glover and Gerald H. Rendall, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931)): 'mendicantes vicatim deos ducunt' ('dragging their god to beg from street to street').

the philosopher Celsus's comparison of Christians with Cybele's begging priests who, according to Celsus, are often depraved and trying to cash in on credulous people.⁸⁴ However, Origen apparently does not question Celsus's view of begging priests. Also Tertullian's mocking remark of gods that are for sale may refer to the begging priests of Cybele.⁸⁵

Whereas the non-Christian writers had emphasized that the festivals of Cybele united the population, Christians remarked that they had gathered together for all the wrong reasons. The Christian authors denounced the immorality of the popular spectacles and aspired to equate all the transgressions of the plays with their pagan nature.⁸⁶ Again, the cult of Cybele offered them the means to do that. The plays that were performed in front of the Mother of the gods were described as being so impudent that they would make anybody blush. Augustine suspects that Scipio Nasica, who once led the goddess to the town, would not want his own mother (should she be granted divine honours) to be commemorated with such obscenities. In fact, even the actors would be ashamed to repeat to their own mothers the words and acts they perform publicly for the Mother of gods. 'What are sacrileges', Augustine asks, 'if those are sacred rites?'⁸⁷ In order to stop the people from frequenting the popular festivals of pagan gods,⁸⁸ the Christian writers

⁸⁴ Origenes, *Contra Celsum*, 1. 9.

⁸⁵ Tertullianus, *Apologeticum*, 13. 6.

⁸⁶ The ancient performances may have included sexual acts or executions of actual criminals embedded into the story line; in addition men were also acting out the female roles. Besides the immorality of the plays, the Christian elite lashed out at the unmanliness they imposed not only on the actors but also on the audience. Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch*, pp. 210–13. For example Tertullian complains that the gods are disgraced by the foul plays and effeminate actors acting out as the gods. In the amphitheatre the gods dance in human blood, or they are shown as suffering themselves; Tertullian mentions the castration of Attis as one of the atrocities re-enacted before the audience. Tertullianus, *Ad nationes*, 1. 10. 1–5; *Apologeticum*, 15. 4–5; G. Sanders, 'Les Galles et le Gallat devant l'opinion chrétienne: la position de Tertullien', in *Hommages à Maarten J. Vermaseren*, ed. by Margreet B. de Boer and T. A. Edridge, *Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'Empire romain*, 68 (Leiden: Brill, 1978), III, 1062–91 (pp. 1069, 1085).

⁸⁷ Tertullianus, *Apologeticum*, 15. 2; *Ad nationes*, 1. 10; Arnobius, *Adversus nationes*, 4. 35; Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, 2. 4–5 (*The City of God against the Pagans*, I: Books I–III, edn with trans. by George E. McCracken, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957)): 'Quae sunt sacrilegia, si illa sunt sacra?' According to his own words, Augustine's description relies on his own experience of the plays. See also Tertullianus, *De spectaculis*, 6, 8; Arnobius, *Adversus nationes*, 5. 42; anon., *Carmen contra paganos*, 76–77.

⁸⁸ Even though the ecclesiastical authorities condemned the traditional festivals and shows as the devil's entertainment, their numerous complaints demonstrate that the Christians were greatly

aimed at presenting them as such that anyone with a sense of decency, let alone anyone calling himself a Christian, would not attend the performances.

One of the most impressive images produced of the 'savage' pagan rituals is the description of the *taurobolium* by the Christian poet Prudentius. Although Cybele is not specifically mentioned, around 400 when *The Crowns of Martyrdom* was written, *taurobolium* was mainly, if not solely, associated with her worship. Prudentius writes how a tormented Christian hero, from his tongueless mouth, utters a gruesome depiction of the gory sacrifice which is set against the purity of a martyr's blood. According to Prudentius, the high priest (*summus sacerdos*) descends into a pit dressed in silk robes, crown, and ribbons. Above the pit a bull is slaughtered so that its blood pours onto the priest standing beneath. Then Prudentius goes on describing how the priest is gloating over the gush of blood, offering his face and open mouth to the gory shower. Finally, the priest comes out of the pit dripping with blood and parading his macabre appearance.⁸⁹ Although this description can hardly be considered authentic,⁹⁰ it is a powerful example of Christian image-making and its purpose is to present the pagan animal sacrifice as bestial and unholy, and its participants as deviant.⁹¹ The aristocratic Romans clinging to their traditional beliefs cannot find redemption in their blood baptism, but the only true purification is to be found in the Christian rites.

The question of the true rituals and means of salvation is accentuated in the discussion of Cybele's mysteries. As I said in the previous section, at least by the late fourth century ideas of resurrection and salvation of those who had undergone the proper rituals were attached to the cult of Cybele. Since Christians declared that deliverance was possible only through their God, it was of the utmost importance for them to prove that the mysteries of Cybele and Attis rested on false pretences. Clement of Alexandria condemns all mysteries as the devil's deception consisting of 'murders and burials'.⁹² The rites are altogether profane and without sanctity.

fascinated by the spectacles. Maijastina Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue: Christian and Pagan Cultures c. 360–430* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 126–31.

⁸⁹ Prudentius, *Peristephanon martyrorum*, 10. 1006–50. The anonymous *Carmen contra paganos* (57–61) also mocks the *taurobolium* ritual and the bloody clothes of the *tauroboliatus*.

⁹⁰ Neil McLynn, 'The Fourth-Century *Taurobolium*', pp. 314–19, takes notice of Prudentius's apparent ignorance of the actual *taurobolium* ritual and even its connection with the cult of Cybele.

⁹¹ Cf. Borgeaud, *Mother of the Gods*, p. 118; Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue*, pp. 115–16.

⁹² Clemens Alexandrinus, *Protrepticus*, 2. 16, 2. 19; cf. *ibid.*, 2. 12. With similar arguments Minucius Felix disapproves of the mysteries of the pagan gods; they are nothing but death, burials, and mourning, and in his opinion, a god is not to be lamented. Minucius Felix, *Octavius*, 23. 1. Firmicus Maternus also questions why the fertility of the earth (as the meaning of the mysteries was

Even the dark hour of the mystery celebrations is like an invitation to licentiousness.⁹³ He thinks that the myth behind the mysteries of Cybele and Attis is shameful and goes on citing the secret symbols of initiation which, in his opinion, are ridiculous. Clement concludes by huffing: 'Are not these symbols a gross insult? Are not these mysteries a laughing stock?'⁹⁴

Firmicus Maternus reports a peculiar tale of the establishment of the cult. According to him, the Phrygians set up annual rites to appease their enraged queen after she had been rejected by her young lover; the queen had in a tyrannical way revenged the arrogance of the youth, and to relieve her regret over his death the Phrygians started to proclaim that he had come back to life again.⁹⁵ In this way, Firmicus Maternus profaned not only the basis of the cult and the claims of resurrection but also the divine status of Cybele and Attis.⁹⁶ Augustine also calls into question whether the mutilated *galli*, noisy cymbals and *tympana*, and the tossing of limbs really can offer eternal life. Instead of denying the supernatural nature of the goddess he declares that the 'Mother of gods' actually is an evil demon who has deluded people into these cruel and horrid rites without giving anything in return.⁹⁷

often interpreted) is celebrated as death with cries, lamentations, and mourning. Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 3. 3–4. Cf. Arnobius, *Adversus nationes* 5. 16–17.

⁹³ Clemens Alexandrinus, *Protrepticus*, 2. 19. The nature of the secret mysteries conducted by the effeminate priests are also scorned by Augustine (*De civitate Dei*, 6. 7) and Pseudo-Paulinus (*Poema ultimum*, 88–93).

⁹⁴ According to the myth, Zeus tried to appease Demeter after having violated her by cutting off a ram's testicles and throwing them in her lap thus making her believe that he had castrated himself. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Protrepticus*, 2. 13–14. Cf. *ibid.*, 2. 19.

⁹⁵ Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 3. 1 (ed. by Konrat Ziegler (Leipzig: Teubner, 1907)): 'ut satis iratae mulieri facerent, aut ut paenitenti solacium quaerent, quem paulo ante sepeliant revixisse iactarunt' ('In order to satisfy the angry woman, or perhaps trying to find consolation for her after she repented, they advanced the claim that he whom they had buried a little while earlier had come to life again': Firmicus Maternus, *The Error of the Pagan Religions*, trans. and annotated by Clarence Allen Forbes, Ancient Christian Writers, 37 (New York: Paulist, 1970)).

⁹⁶ However, this was not a Christian invention since Diodorus of Sicily had, in the first century BCE, already presented a rationalized mythical version according to which Cybele was the daughter of Meion, the king of Phrygia, and Lydia, and Attis was a local youth with whom she had fallen in love. Diodorus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 3. 58. 1–59. 1.

⁹⁷ Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, 7. 24. Otherwise Augustine's silence about the pagan mysteries and their promises of a better afterlife can be seen as a denial or avoidance of their claims. Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue*, p. 67.

Augustine also contrasts the true Christian spectacles with the bloody and womanish festivals of demons which can no longer seduce Christians.⁹⁸

Besides the improper rituals, the Christian writers pointed out that the myths told about the pagan gods were, in fact, insulting the gods; especially the love affair between Cybele and Attis, as well as the castration of the latter were frequently referred to. As mentioned above, Clement of Alexandria had already pointed out that the myths behind the mysteries were impudent and ridiculous. Minucius Felix agrees, and adds that the stories relating to Cybele are truly shameful. The goddess had been worn out after giving birth to several gods, and not being able to satisfy her lover, she made him impotent.⁹⁹ Lactantius profanes this account further. He says that Cybele was an aged widow who fell in love with a young man, and after being betrayed by him, she emasculated him.¹⁰⁰

The most detailed description of the myth related to Cybele and Attis is offered by Arnobius. He relates how the Mother of gods turns down the advances of Jupiter and in consequence an androgynous being named Agdistis is born from a rock. This monster spreads destruction driven by his fierce desires, which frightens the gods. They intoxicate Agdistis and make him castrate himself; from the blood fallen on the ground springs up a pomegranate tree. The daughter of the river king Sangarius is impregnated by a fruit from the tree, and thus Attis is born. The fair youngster is loved by both Agdistis and the Mother of gods. The Phrygian king Midas wants to spare Attis from the approaches of Agdistis and marries him off to his daughter. This infuriates Agdistis who drives the wedding guests crazy and, raving mad, Attis also castrates himself under a pine tree. The Mother of gods and Agdistis lament the dead Attis; Agdistis begs Jupiter to resurrect Attis, which he is not allowed to do, but Jupiter permits that his body will not decay. After this narrative of illicit lust, mutilation, and death, Arnobius asks whether it would be possible for someone attempting to offend the gods to write anything more blasphemous and vicious.¹⁰¹ And what is even more severe, according to Arnobius,

⁹⁸ Augustinus, *Tractatus in Johannem*, 7. 6 (*In Iohannis evangelium tractatus CXXIV*, ed. by Radbodius Willems, Corpus christianorum, Series Latina, 36 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1954)). The festival of blood, *festivitas sanguinis*, of 'nescio cuius mulieris' (of what woman, I do not know) probably refers to the rites of the *galli*. Pépin, 'Réactions du christianisme latin', pp. 263–67.

⁹⁹ Minucius Felix, *Octavius*, 23. 2.

¹⁰⁰ Lactantius, *Epitome divinarum institutionum*, 8. See also Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 3. 1; Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, 6. 7.

¹⁰¹ Arnobius, *Adversus nationes*, 5. 5–8.

these stories cannot be ignored as poets' fables since they are incorporated into the secret mysteries and annual celebrations.¹⁰²

Arnobius discusses the offences presented in the myth one by one. According to the legend, the Mother of gods is recently born or, in fact, a human. All the same, she is desired by her own son Jupiter, whose criminal passion makes him violate her; and if there was nothing wrong with this incestuous union, Arnobius asks, then why did the Mother refuse to give in to the advances?¹⁰³ Attis, in turn, was desired by both his grandmother Cybele and the emasculated Agdistis.¹⁰⁴ Further, the gods were afraid of the mortal Agdistis — for, surely, it is not possible to castrate a god — and had to resort to low intrigues in order to tame him.¹⁰⁵ The whole narrative is full of unnatural breeding: stones give birth, apples impregnate women, flowers and trees spring up from corpses. In brief, the myth is about rage, madness, blood, and the cutting of genitals. Arnobius concludes by saying that the whole story is fictional — if it was true the gods had no reason to be angry at the Christians; instead, they should be affronted by the ludicrous lies told by the pagans.¹⁰⁶

The myth of Attis's castration brings us back to the eunuch priests. Whereas the earlier Roman writers had labelled the *galli* as deviant and unwanted yet tolerated, and had neatly classified them under the title of 'Phrygian', for the Christian writers they came to represent everything that was wrong about the gentile Roman religion. First of all, as the earlier Roman writers had already remarked, they were acting in a way that was unbecoming to a minister of god. They were vile and wanton, and their public display violated all modesty.¹⁰⁷ They mutilated themselves as

¹⁰² Arnobius, *Adversus nationes*, 5. 1.

¹⁰³ Arnobius, *Adversus nationes*, 5. 8–10.

¹⁰⁴ Arnobius, *Adversus nationes*, 5. 13.

¹⁰⁵ Arnobius, *Adversus nationes*, 5. 11–12.

¹⁰⁶ Arnobius, *Adversus nationes*, 5. 10, 5. 13–15. Arnobius also ridicules the 'resurrection of Attis' which consists of the growth of his hair and the movement of his little finger — some higher force prevented Jupiter from restoring the rest. *Ibid.*, 5. 14.

¹⁰⁷ Arnobius, *Adversus nationes*, 5. 11. See also Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, 7. 26. Justin Martyr (*1. apologia*, 27) already claimed that in the name of Cybele's mysteries eunuchs are created for the purpose of sodomy. In the Christian context the charge of sexual lustfulness was especially grave since sex was seen as the essence of sin, and renunciation of sex was considered as the sign of strength and manliness. Furthermore, by employing the existing Roman rhetoric and thus appealing to the common values, the effeminate men were condemned as violating the natural boundaries between the sexes (e.g. Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, 6. 8; Pseudo-Augustinus, *Quaestiones veteris et novi testamenti*, 114. 7). For more detail, see Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch*, pp. 161–78.

if gashing oneself in the name of god would sanctify the dreadful act.¹⁰⁸ Especially, the emasculation of the priests was firmly condemned by the Christian authors as abominable and monstrous. Minucius Felix considers that it is an outrage to appease the god by self-mutilation and observes that if God wanted eunuchs he could produce them.¹⁰⁹ Augustine announces that with her consecrated effeminates, Cybele has surpassed all the other gods in cruelty and evil. In her temples, which truly are demons' temples, Roman men are so disfigured that they cannot be considered either men or women.¹¹⁰

Thus, the Christian elite, once again, dissected the eunuch priests in their writings. They found it very easy to condemn the whole field of paganism through the frenzied effeminates who featured in a prominent Roman cult. After all, generalizations were an effective way of portraying a certain cult — or the whole of paganism for that matter — in a bad light.¹¹¹ So any questionable feature in one individual cult could be expanded to pertain to all the various cults, and a reference to the eunuch priests and the myths behind their castration could label all pagan cult practices as absurd. As a consequence, the *galli* were undoubtedly one of the reasons which made the champions of Christian faith attack the cult of Cybele more than others. After all, they were prominent, present, and unanimously shunned.

¹⁰⁸ Prudentius, *Peristephanon martyrorum*, 10. 1059–65; Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones*, 1. 21. Tertullian comments sarcastically that a man who jumps from a temple's tower is judged differently from a man leaping from his neighbour's roof, and following the same logic the inspiration for cutting one's genitals and arms is different from the madness that makes one slit one's throat. Tertullianus, *Apologeticum*, 22. 3. See also Augustine citing Seneca in *De civitate Dei*, 6. 10.

¹⁰⁹ Minucius Felix, *Octavius*, 22. 9 (edn with English trans. by Rendall): 'aut qui testa sunt obscena demessa, quo modo deum violat qui hoc modo placat, cum si eunuchos deus vellet, posset procreare, non facere' ('and propitiatory self-mutilation — is it not an insult to God? If God wanted eunuchs, could he not produce, not make them?'). See also *ibid.*, 23. 2; Prudentius, *Peristephanon martyrorum*, 10. 1066–70.

¹¹⁰ Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, 2. 7, 7. 24, 7. 26. Cf. Pseudo-Augustinus, *Questiones veteris et novi testamenti*, 114. 7, 115. 18. Tertullian calls the eunuchs a third sex ('de tertio sexu'). Tertullianus, *Ad nationes*, 1. 20. The sexlessness of eunuchs is also confirmed by Prudentius in *Peristephanon martyrorum*, 10. 1071–73; cf. above the views of Valerius Maximus and Claudian. The dehumanization of eunuchs is also evident in the writing of Clement who compares their castration to a disease ('the womanish disease'). Clemens Alexandrinus, *Protrepticus*, 2. 20. Cf. Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, 6. 8.

¹¹¹ Even the word paganism is a good example of generalization: the entire gamut of different cults and practices is brought under one single word and by using it anything particular (such as eunuch priests) can be made general ('eunuch priests are typical of paganism'). See also Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch*, pp. 249–54.

Despite the condemnation of *galli*, castration in itself was not so simple an issue for the Christian elite. Jesus himself had declared that under given circumstances emasculation was in order, and obviously many men inside the Church took this literally. Only little by little did the official Christian opinion start clearly supporting spiritual castration in the form of abstinence instead of actual physical castration.¹¹² What, however, was clearly condemnable about the *galli* was that their castration was carried out on account of lust, not chastity,¹¹³ and that even after the emasculation they carried on with their lascivious ways. This notion is evident when the Christian writers underline the connection between the myth of illicit desire and jealousy and the act of castration by the priests.¹¹⁴ Also, by emphasizing the deviant costume and behaviour as well as the notorious lustfulness of the *galli*, the objectors to physical castration may have aimed at altering the views on castration as an acceptable implement of chastity inside the Christian community. After all, the eunuch priests of Cybele demonstrated the practice as part and parcel of paganism.

The *galli* were not only reprehended as such but they were also employed to belie the arguments presented by the last defenders of the traditional cults. As I illustrated in the previous section, the pagan elite resorted to allegories in order to

¹¹² Jesus identifies those who are born eunuchs, those who are made eunuchs, and those who choose to become eunuchs for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 19. 12). The best known example of the latter is the theologian Origen. In the *Church History*, Eusebius on the one hand tries to explain his castration away as the excess and thoughtlessness of the youth, but on the other hand he cannot help admiring the deed as an ultimate token of faith and continence. Eusebius also stresses how Origen's castration was accepted by notable churchmen. Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 6. 8. 1–5. Already Justin Martyr records a case in Alexandria where a Christian man appealed to the governor to get permission to castrate himself; his petition, however, was denied. Justinus Martyr, *1. apologia*, 29. According to Hippolytus, the Gnostic sect known as the Naassenes took part in the mysteries of Cybele, and although they did not castrate themselves, they adhered to the strictest abstinence as if they were emasculated; thus, they combined the idea of celibacy to the rites of Cybele. Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, 5. 4. The voluntary castration of clerics was officially condemned in the Council of Nicea in 325. Even so, Ambrose, writing at the end of the fourth century, notes that there are still those who practise self-castration, but he sees that the true feat of strength is to overcome one's sinful passions, not to remove the cause of them. Ambrosius, *De viduis*, 13. 75–77. On the ambiguous attitude towards eunuchs in early Christianity, see Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch*, pp. 258–73; Sanders, 'Les Galles et le Gallat', pp. 1073–82; Borgeaud, *Mother of the Gods*, pp. 96–97.

¹¹³ This is clearly stated by, e.g., Prudentius in *Peristephanon martyrorum*, 10. 196–200. Cf. Borgeaud, *Mother of the Gods*, pp. 99–101.

¹¹⁴ See below, notes 116 and 117.

explain the awkward myths, and these were soon targeted by the Christian writers. Augustine taunts that he has not seen the pagans offer any explanation for the *galli*, and deduces: 'Interpretation failed, reason blushed and eloquence fell silent.'¹¹⁵ Secondly, the Christian writers pointed out that the atrocities presented in the myths were celebrated in the mysteries and re-enacted in the bloody rites of the *galli*, which proved that the myths were, in fact, taken as real.¹¹⁶ Several of them observed that the *galli* castrate themselves in order to commemorate Attis's wretched fate at the hands of his jealous mistress.¹¹⁷ Firmicus Maternus directly says that the emperors have tried to hide the error, which was the establishment of the cult of Cybele, behind scientific explanations, where Cybele represents the earth and Attis the yearly cycle of the crops. After that, he sarcastically asks how the growth of crops can be confused with death, revenge, and love affairs.¹¹⁸ The Christian writers also seized on the paradoxality of the proposed connection between castration and fertility.¹¹⁹

However, not unlike castration, also the utilization of allegories was problematic for the Christians. They were eager to refute the interpretations put forward

¹¹⁵ Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, 7. 26 (Augustine, *The City of God against the Pagans*, II: *Books IV–VII*, edn with trans. by William M. Green, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963)): 'Defecit interpretatio, erubuit ratio, conticuit oratio'. Augustine also asks rhetorically what interpretation is offered for the castration of Attis — *ibid.*, 7. 25: 'Quid eo significari dicitur? Quo refertur? Quae interpretatio inde profertur?' ('What is supposed to be symbolized by this? To what does it refer? What interpretation is offered for it?') — the model of the *galli*'s self-mutilation, and ironically notes that Varro was wise to ignore the tale. Cf. Fear's observations about Augustine's agenda, Fear, 'Cybele and Christ', p. 46.

¹¹⁶ Arnobius, *Adversus nationes*, 5. 1, 5. 16–17; cf. *ibid.*, 5. 42; Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, 7. 26. In general, Christian authors were eager to stress the interconnectedness between the reprehensible myths and pagan rituals. Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue*, pp. 162–65.

¹¹⁷ Tertullianus, *Ad nationes*, 2. 7; Minucius Felix, *Octavius*, 23. 2; Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones*, 1. 17; *Epitome divinarum institutionum*, 8; Prudentius, *Contra Symmachum*, 2. 51–52; *Peristephanon martyrorum*, 10. 196–200; Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, 6. 7, 7. 25. Cf. Pseudo-Paulinus, *Poema ultimum*, 80–93.

¹¹⁸ Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 3. 2–4. Eusebius and Augustine, in their turn, refuted Porphyry's agricultural allegories of Cybele and Attis. Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica*, 3. 11; Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, 7. 25; cf. *ibid.*, 6. 8. On Augustine, see Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue*, pp. 182–83. The allegory of Cybele as the earth was often disputed on the grounds that there were several goddesses with different names representing the same earth. Arnobius, *Adversus nationes*, 3. 32; Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, 7. 24, 4. 10, 7. 16. See also Tertullianus, *Adversus Marcionem*, 1. 13.

¹¹⁹ Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, 7. 24; cf. *ibid.*, 7. 25.

by pagan intellectuals, but on the other hand the church fathers were themselves often resorting to allegorical interpretations when reading the Bible and the Old Testament in particular. Although Arnobius was ready to discard the method in its entirety, Origen in his turn applauded the biblical texts for their double meaning.¹²⁰ While most Christian writers only attempted to disprove the allegorical explanations of pagan myths stating that there were no hidden meanings behind their blatant stories, the cult practices related to the mythic narrative of Cybele and Attis were an effortless way of verifying this.

As I mentioned above, the proponents of the cult of Cybele were eager to enhance its antiquity, and a common argument for the traditional cults in general was that they had contributed to the greatness of Rome; for instance, Cybele had expelled the Carthaginians from Rome.¹²¹ The Christian response to this was that once the cult of Cybele had been a novelty in Rome, as well.¹²² Secondly, one should not count too much on the help provided by the foreign deities since they had clearly deserted their own native lands for the Romans.¹²³ Prudentius goes further by declaring that, once the Roman ancestors had erred in welcoming the foreign deities, they carried on their aberration for ages; on the other hand, the eunuch priests of Cybele could not offer great military support for anyone.¹²⁴

It seems that the most heated attacks on the Christian side were targeted against cultic features which could be interpreted as redolent of Christian practices.¹²⁵ These were often also issues that caused complications inside the Christian community. Among these were the aforementioned debates on castration, allegorical

¹²⁰ Rokeah, *Jews, Pagans and Christians*, pp. 104–07, 112–13, 212.

¹²¹ For example, Minucius Felix places these arguments in the mouth of the pagan opponent in *Octavius* (6, 7. 3). On the refutation of this line of argumentation in general, see, e.g., Rokeah, *Jews, Pagans and Christians*, pp. 181–82.

¹²² This was clearly one of the arguments directed against the Christian God. Arnobius, *Adversus nationes*, 2. 73. Cf. Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, 3. 12.

¹²³ Tertullianus, *Apologeticum*, 25. 4; Minucius Felix, *Octavius*, 25. 9; Arnobius, *Adversus nationes*, 5. 49.

¹²⁴ Prudentius, *Contra Symmachum*, 1. 180–88, 1. 197–99, 2. 521–23.

¹²⁵ Fear, 'Cybele and Christ', p. 38, notes that on these grounds 'the metroac cult was seen as more threatening to Christianity than other pagan religions'. Thus, it could be deduced that the main rhetorical strategy the Christians employed in their discussion on the cult of Cybele was the rhetoric of difference, which aimed at downplaying the similarities. See Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue*, p. 58. Cf. also Jonathan Z. Smith, 'Differential Equations on Constructing the Other', a chapter in Smith's *Relating Religion: Essays in the Study of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), pp. 230–50 (pp. 245–46).

interpretations, and the antiquity — and hence the validity — of the tradition. The multitude of parallels¹²⁶ between the Christian faith and the cult of Cybele posed a challenge to the Church and called for an explanation; especially the mother of God, the Virgin Mary, was in danger of assuming attributes from Cybele.¹²⁷ The Christian elite aspired to demonstrate, to the followers of pagan cult but also to the potentially wavering sympathizers of Christianity,¹²⁸ that the Christian practices were the only true ones and they alone could offer redemption. The Christian response to the parallels was that they were a diabolic imitation,¹²⁹ in other words the devil's way of seducing people away from the true God. This is,

¹²⁶ The mother of God was easily translated into the Mother of gods, and the shepherd god Attis in many ways resembled the good shepherd, Jesus. The myth recorded by Arnobius included the idea of the immaculate conception of Attis. The spring festivities of Cybele and Attis fell at the same time as Easter. The pine tree, under which Attis castrated himself, symbolizing his death, was not very far from the cross symbolizing the suffering and death of the Christ. Even ideas about Attis's resurrection and the salvation of his followers were circulated. The *taurobolium* ritual evolved into a kind of baptism. Also a ritual dinner similar to the Eucharist was part of Cybele's mysteries (Clemens Alexandrinus, *Protrepticus*, 2. 14; Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 18. 1–2). On the similarities, see Fear, 'Cybele and Christ', pp. 39–40.

¹²⁷ The case of the Montanist sect, later denounced as heretical, had showed that the influences could easily travel both ways; Montanus himself was accused of being a eunuch. Hieronymus, *Epistula*, 41. 4. Fear, 'Cybele and Christ', pp. 38–39; Borgeaud, *Mother of the Gods*, pp. 96–97.

¹²⁸ For those brought up in a polytheistic environment, the necessity of making a choice between the new faith and the old practices was not a matter of course. Many people did not see Christianity and traditional cults as mutually exclusive; thus, a person could be nominally a Christian, but still attend pagan rituals and festivals. Especially after the turn of the fifth century, being Christian may also have been a matter of convenience, not of conviction. The Christian leaders went to great pains in order to ensure the undivided fidelity of the vague followers to the Church. Maijastina Kahlos calls these undecided persons *incerti* and describes them as in constant flux between the hard-line Christians and hard-line pagans. See the discussion in Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue*, pp. 31–48, 86–87. It is evident that the Christian polemical and apologetic writings were mainly read inside Christian circles. The writers also kept this in mind, thereby offering their audience a consolidation of faith and argumentative tools to be used in dealings with outsiders. See, e.g., Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue*, pp. 63–65; Mark Edwards and others, 'Introduction: Apologetics in the Roman World', in *Apologetics in the Roman Empire: Pagans, Jews, and Christians*, ed. by Mark Edwards, Martin Goodman, and Simon Price, in association with Christopher Rowland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 1–13 (pp. 8–9); Simon Price, 'Latin Christian Apologetics: Minucius Felix, Tertullian, and Cyprian', in *Apologetics in the Roman Empire*, ed. by Edwards, Goodman, and Price, pp. 105–29 (pp. 105–06).

¹²⁹ See, e.g., Pépin, 'Réactions du christianisme latin', pp. 258–59, 261–63; Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue*, pp. 61–62; Sanders, 'Les Galles et le Gallat', pp. 1069–70.

for example, how Firmicus Maternus accounted for the mysteries. He added that the devil also had his Christs.¹³⁰ No doubt, one of them was seen to be Attis.

The Christian elite wanted to represent the Christian faith as unique and independent from the traditional Roman cults. This agenda was in blatant conflict with the large number of parallel characteristics that Christianity shared with the cult of Cybele. In order to refute any claims of common ground between the two, the Christian writers attempted to dramatize the disadvantages of the metroac cult and hence accentuate the differences. This was mostly done by reinforcing the existing negative imagery related to the cult, the starting point of which were the eunuch priests. Their deviant behaviour and alleged obscenity were extended to pertain to all the different rituals; the indecent features of the tale about the love affair of Cybele and Attis were also employed to further discredit the spectacles and cult practices that had their justification in the myth. And when similarities could not be dispelled, they were labelled as diabolic imitation. The message of exclusiveness was mainly directed at the Christian community itself in order to keep them in line with the Christian teachings and stop them from following practices outside the church's parameters. The leaders did not want lukewarm Christians, they demanded absolute allegiance.

Conclusion

I have explored how the pagan elite on the one hand and the Christian elite on the other employed and elaborated the image of the cult of Cybele in their discourse and dispute on the true religion. As a starting point for the discussion in Late Antiquity, there already existed a twofold image that, first, represented Cybele as a benevolent ancestral goddess who was embraced by the people and the elite alike and, secondly, projected everything that was considered bizarre, problematic, and unacceptable about the cult onto the Phrygian priests, the *galli*, who thus became the embodiment of otherness. The pagan elite took the cult of Cybele as one of their focal points in their defence of traditional Roman religion. In literature, they expressed their personal devotion, emphasized the existing positive aspects of the image as well as adjusted the mythology in order to represent it as more rational. However, no matter how the champions of the traditional cults attempted to

¹³⁰ Firmicus Maternus, *De errore profanarum religionum*, 18. 1–2, 22. 1, 22. 4. Cf. Clemens Alexandrinus, *Protrepticus*, 2. 19; and Jerome's denunciation of the fasting connected with the worship of Cybele in *Adversus Iovinianum*, 2. 17.

portray the cult of Cybele as acceptable and familiar, among them there were the others, the eunuch priests, whom they tried hard but could not quite manage to overlook. They were the irreconcilable difference.

Needless to say, the aim of the Christian elite was the opposite. They declared the previously favourable aspects of the image null and void or reinterpreted them in a negative light. At the same time, they invested energy in exploiting the despised image of the eunuch priests, whom they saw as living proof of the overall unjustifiable nature of paganism. Even though the Christian elite attempted to portray the cult of Cybele as the ultimate otherness, they had more in common with the cult than they were willing to admit. Therefore, othering also served the purpose of distinguishing themselves from the pagan cults in general and from the cult of Cybele in particular. The contrasts they drew between the metroac religion and the Christian faith were mostly literary constructions that helped to crystallize their own identity.

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‘THAT ILL-FORMED LITTLE FOX’: VALENTINIANS AS THE ENEMY IN IRENAEUS’S *AGAINST HERESIES*

Päivi Vähäkangas

Around 180 Irenaeus, the bishop of Lyon, devoted himself to writing a refutation of Valentinians, who for him represented a major threat against his interpretation of Christian faith. The result was five books under the title of *Exposé and Overthrow of What Is Falsely Called Knowledge*, commonly known as *Against Heresies*.¹ Irenaeus succeeded in his task. *Against Heresies* was widely circulated in a short time and it became a model for later heresiologies such as the famous works of Epiphanius of Salamis, Hippolytus of Rome, and Tertullian. Irenaeus’s description remained as one of the main sources of Valentinianism until the discovery of Nag Hammadi library in 1945.² In fact the image that Irenaeus created of Valentinians has proven itself so influential that even modern scholars

¹ Irenaeus refers to his book using the long form in *Against Heresies* (*Adversus haereses*) 2 praef. 2. 4 and 5 praef. 1. 1. Eusebius also gives the title Ἐλέγχου καὶ ἀνατροπῆς τῆς ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως in *Historia ecclesiastica*, 5. 7. 1. The short form was known by Eusebius (*Historia ecclesiastica*, 2. 13. 5, 3. 28. 6), Basil of Caesarea (*De spiritu sancto*, 29. 72), Jerome (*De viris illustribus*, 35), Maximus Confessor (*Scholia*, 7), and Photius (*Bibliotheca*, 120).

² The only evidence of Valentinian documents before that were fragments and quotations from the works of Valentinian teachers presented by Clement of Alexandria, Hippolytus of Rome, Epiphanius of Salamis, and Origen. For a text edition of these, see Walther Völker, *Quellen zur Geschichte der Christlichen Gnosis* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1932). The following texts from the Nag Hammadi library have often been classified as Valentinian: *The Prayer of the Apostle Paul* (Nag Hammadi Codices [hereafter NHC], I, 1), *The Gospel of Truth* (NHC, I, 3; XII, 2), *The Tripartite Tractate* (NHC, I, 5), *The Treatise on the Resurrection* (Letter to Rheginus, NHC, I, 4), *The Gospel of Philip* (NHC, II, 3), *The (First) Apocalypse of James* (NHC, V, 3), *The Interpretation of Knowledge* (NHC, XI, 1), and *A Valentinian Exposition* (NHC, XI, 2).

may take it for granted; if not the details, at least the general attitude. Rowan Greer, for example, states that 'Everything we know points to the syncretistic character of Gnosticism, its kaleidoscopic use of myth, and its failure to arrive at any fully coherent view'.³ He has adopted exactly those accusations levelled against Valentinians. Their obscurity, lack of coherence, and habit of borrowing elements from here and there are contrasted with the pure, original, and coherent doctrine of 'ours'. Irenaeus was also the first who used the epithet 'Gnostics' of his adversaries.⁴ For these reasons, Irenaeus has been the centre of attention for numerous scholars. Earlier studies were mainly focussed on reconstructing the history and beliefs of Valentinians from the pieces of information given by Irenaeus.⁵ Since the discovery of the Nag Hammadi library, scholars have been interested in the new Valentinian sources and in the comparison of this new evidence to the parallel information in the heresiologies. Studies on Irenaeus have concentrated on such matters as his familiarity with philosophy and rhetorics or his role as a narrator and a theologian.⁶ Among the modern studies on heresiology, Gerard Vallée's book

³ Rowan Greer, 'The Dog and the Mushrooms', in *Rediscovery of Gnosticism*, I, ed. by Bentley Layton (Leiden: Brill, 1980), pp. 146–71 (p. 148).

⁴ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 1. 29. 1. 'Gnostic' and 'Gnosticism' seem to be artificial categories that were never used by those to whom these terms refer. There has recently been much debate on the problematics of this term and whether it should be renounced completely. See Karen L. King, *What Is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2003) and King, 'The Origins of Gnosticism and the Identity of Christianity', in *Was There a Gnostic Religion?*, ed. by Antti Marjanen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005), pp. 103–20; Michael Allen Williams, *Rethinking 'Gnosticism': An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), and Williams, 'Was There a Gnostic Religion? Strategies for a Clearer Analysis', in *Was There a Gnostic Religion?*, ed. by Marjanen, pp. 55–79. Some scholars still find 'Gnosticism' a useful and appropriate term; see Bentley Layton, 'Prolegomena to the Study of Ancient Gnosticism', in *The Social World of the First Christians: Essays in Honor of Wayne A. Meeks*, ed. by L. Michael White and O. Larry Yarbrough (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), pp. 334–50; Birger A. Pearson, 'Gnosticism as a Religion', in *Was There a Gnostic Religion?*, ed. by Marjanen, pp. 81–101.

⁵ See the massive study of François-M.-M. Sagnard, *La Gnose valentinienne et le témoignage de Saint Irénée* (Paris: Vrin, 1947).

⁶ For example, Thomas C. K. Ferguson, 'The Rule of Truth and Irenaeus Rhetoric in Book 1 of *Against Heresies*', *Vigiliae Christianae*, 55 (2001), 356–75; PHEME PERKINS, 'Irenaeus and the Gnostics: Rhetoric and Composition in Adversus Haereses Book One', *Vigiliae Christianae*, 30 (1976), 193–200, and Perkins, 'Ordering the Cosmos: Irenaeus and the Gnostics', in *Nag Hammadi, Gnosticism and Early Christianity*, ed. by Charles W. Hedrick and Robert Hodgson, Jr (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1986), pp. 221–38; William R. Schoedel, 'Philosophy and Rhetoric in the Adversus Haereses of Irenaeus', *Vigiliae Christianae*, 13 (1959), 22–32.

about the anti-Gnostic polemics in Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and Epiphanius is useful and also takes into account the socio-political motives.⁷ Alain Le Boulluec’s profound two-volume study about the concept of heresy in the second and third centuries is also worth noting.⁸ In this article I shall leave aside other heresies and concentrate on Irenaeus’s polemics against Valentinians, especially in Book 1. Instead of doctrinal contents, I examine the means and strategies used in his refutation. I have divided Irenaeus’s main arguments into four categories which I shall discuss in the following order: (1) the dubious origin, (2) imitation of the Church, (3) doctrinal inconsistency, and (4) immoral behaviour. Finally, I touch briefly on other examples of similar rhetoric.

Irenaeus as the Expert in All Fields

Born and educated in Alexandria, Valentinus became an influential Christian teacher in Rome during the first half of the second century. According to Tertullian he was even a candidate for bishop, but not having achieved this, he eventually withdrew from the city.⁹ His followers apparently maintained a firm foothold in Rome, since a few decades later, Irenaeus felt compelled to attack them. In addition to the concern showed by heresiologists, the number of Valentinian teachers known by name betrays the significance of Valentinianism.¹⁰ But what did Irenaeus

⁷ Gérard Vallée, *A Study in Anti-Gnostic Polemics: Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and Epiphanius*, Studies in Christianity and Judaism, 1 (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1981). I must, however, disagree with his claim (pp. 29–30) that Gnosticism had ‘a strong revolutionary impetus’ and that Irenaeus saw it as not only a theological danger but also a social one. Myth and reality do not necessarily correspond. The alleged world negation of some Gnostic groups does not always lead into renunciation of all authorities and rebellious behaviour. In fact, Irenaeus implies exactly the opposite when he disapproves of the too close participation in the public life of Roman society on the part of some Valentinians (*Against Heresies*, 1. 6. 3). See also Williams, *Rethinking*, pp. 96–115.

⁸ Alain Le Boulluec, *La Notion d’hérésie dans la littérature grecque I^{er}–III^e siècles*, 2 vols (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1985).

⁹ Tertullianus, *Adversus Valentinianos*, 4. The historical reliability of this information has been called into question. See Christoph Marksches, *Valentinus Gnosticus? Untersuchungen zur valentinianischen Gnosis mit einem Kommentar zu den Fragmenten Valentins* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), p. 308.

¹⁰ Ismo Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism: Myth, Lifestyle, and Society in the School of Valentinus* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), p. 2, lists Valentinus, Heracleon, Theodotus, Ptolemaeus, Marcus, Florinus, Secundus, Axionicus, Ardesianes, Theotimus, and Alexander. By

know about Valentinians? In the preface of the first book of *Against Heresies* Irenaeus claims to have become acquainted with the doctrines of Valentinians by reading their commentaries and by conversing with some of them.¹¹ He does not usually name his sources, with few exceptions.¹² Scholars have identified the source behind *Against Heresies*, 1. 29 as the *Apocryphon of John*, but the account of Valentinian doctrines in *Against Heresies*, 1. 1–7, which Irenaeus ascribes to the followers of Ptolemaeus, does not seem to rely on any document preserved to us.¹³ In fact it is nearly impossible to discern the underlying document since Irenaeus does not faithfully reproduce the original text. Several recent studies imply that it was Irenaeus himself rather than Valentinians who systematized their doctrine, emphasizing aspects that suited his purposes.¹⁴ It is clear that Irenaeus really had some firsthand knowledge of the teaching of his adversaries. Yet he was not a historian in the modern sense aiming at objectivity. Concerning Valentinianism, Ismo Dunderberg prefers to refer to Irenaeus and other heresiologists as ‘hostile sources’, thus emphasizing their intentions as narrators.¹⁵ Opinions on the reliability of Irenaeus as a source of information about Valentinians have varied from one end to the other.¹⁶ Irenaeus indeed had original Valentinian sources at hand, but he fails to

comparison, it is estimated that Proclus, the head of Athenian Academy in the fifth century, had only half a dozen serious students. For an introduction to each of these Valentinian teachers, see Einar Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed: The Church of the ‘Valentinians’* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), pp. 494–503.

¹¹ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 1 praef. 2.

¹² In *Against Heresies*, 3. 11. 9 Irenaeus refers to a Valentinian gospel entitled the *Gospel of Truth*. He does not describe the contents of this gospel, but there is no reason to think that it would be a different document than the one under the same title in the Nag Hammadi library (I, 3 and XII, 2).

¹³ On the use of the *Apocryphon of John*, see, e.g., Martin Krause, ‘The Relation of the Apocryphon of John to the Account in Irenaeus’, in *Gnosis*, I: *Patristic Evidence*, ed. by Werner Foerster, English trans. by R. M. Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), pp. 100–03; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 1. 1–7 is known as the ‘Great Account’ or the ‘system of Ptolemaeus’ or ‘System/Version A’ in contrast with ‘System B’ presented by Hippolytus.

¹⁴ Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, pp. 197–98; Klaus Koschorke, *Die Polemik der Gnostiker gegen das kirchliche Christentum: unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Nag-Hammadi-Traktate ‘Apokalypse des Petrus’ (NHC, VII, 3) und ‘Testimonium Veritatis’ (NHC, IX, 3)* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), p. 210; Le Boulluec, *La Notion d’hérésie*, I, 240.

¹⁵ Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, p. 8.

¹⁶ Sagnard, *La Gnose*, pp. 99–103, for example, admits that Irenaeus has a certain tendency in presenting his adversaries but is anyhow convinced that his description is reliable. According to him,

present a balanced account of their contents. Thus, Irenaeus’s side of the story is not enough in reconstructing Valentinianism. Instead of giving an objective description of Valentinian theology, *Against Heresies* reveals what Irenaeus viewed as a threat to and an indispensable part of his faith and by what means he convinced his readers that Valentinians are not just harmless Christians with some differing interpretations but the enemies of truth.¹⁷

It is clear right from the beginning that Irenaeus is familiar with rhetorical strategies. He has organized the whole work following the rules of the handbooks of rhetoric. William R. Schoedel divides the work in the following way:¹⁸

Exordium: preface to Book 1

Narratio: the rest of Book 1

Confutatio and *confirmatio*: refutation by reason (Book 2), refutation by apostolic tradition (Book 3), refutation by prophets (Book 4), and refutation by the Lord’s words (Book 5)

Peroratio: missing

As Thomas C. K. Ferguson has pointed out, however, this division is too simplistic.¹⁹ Book 1 is not entirely narration but already contains refutation which interrupts the narrative sections. In fact, the material in Book 1 can be divided into three blocks. The first one consists of Chapters 1–7 and is often called ‘the Great Account’ or the ‘system of Ptolemaeus’.²⁰ In Chapters 8 and 9 Irenaeus refutes his opponents’ use of Scripture, and in Chapter 10 he presents his own Rule of Truth. After this, there are two rather unconnected chapters about the systems of Valentinus and his followers as well as those of Ptolemaeus and Colorbasus. Chapters 13–21 form the

Irenaeus wants to win his adversaries by throwing light on their true nature. This goal cannot be achieved if he misrepresents their doctrines. After the discovery of the Nag Hammadi library, many scholars discarded altogether the testimony of heresiologists and pursued building a better picture of Valentinians in the light of their own writings. However, as Vallée, *Anti-Gnostic Polemics*, pp. 1–2, has pointed out, these scholars still regularly look for parallel information in heresiologies to support their arguments.

¹⁷ Also Vallée, *Anti-Gnostic Polemics*, pp. 1–4, emphasizes the importance of Irenaeus’s work as an early interpretation of Valentinian documents as well as of the essence of Christianity.

¹⁸ Schoedel, ‘Philosophy’, pp. 27–28.

¹⁹ Ferguson, ‘The Rule of Truth’, pp. 356–75.

²⁰ Sagnard, *La Gnose*, pp. 220–32. Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, pp. 197–98, believes that Irenaeus had in mind the followers of Ptolemaeus and not Ptolemaeus himself. Irenaeus, in fact, most often uses the plural form ‘they say’ when he refers to his opponents.

second block, the narration and refutation of a Valentinian teacher called Marcus and his followers.²¹ Chapter 22 returns to the Rule of Truth. From Chapter 23 onwards, Irenaeus simply describes the doctrines of several teachers without adding refutations between them as he formerly did. This third block deviates greatly from the two former ones and is likely to come from a different source containing very little editing by Irenaeus. My outline of the arrangement of Book 1 in a detailed manner, taking into account that this book is also an independent piece of work and not only part of the larger whole, would be the following:

Preface *exordium*

1. 1–3. 5 *narratio* (the origin of the aeons and the fall of Wisdom)
3. 6 *confutatio*
4. 1–2 *narratio* (Achamoth and the origin of the material world)
4. 3–4 *confutatio*
4. 5–6. 2 *narratio* (formation of the Demiurge and Man and the threefold nature of humanity)
6. 3–4 *confutatio*
7. 1–5 *narratio* (three classes of people)
8. 1 *confutatio*
8. 2–5 *narratio* (Valentinian use of Scripture)
9. 1–5 *confutatio*
10. 1–3 *confirmatio* (Rule of Truth)
11. 1–12. 4 *narratio* (systems of the followers of Valentinus and Ptolemaeus)
13. 1–7 *narratio* and *confutatio* (Marcus)
14. 1–15. 3 *narratio* (Marcosian systems of numbers and letters)
15. 4–6 *confutatio*
16. 1–2 *narratio* (Marcosian numerology)
16. 3 *confutatio*
17. 1–20. 3 *narratio* (Marcosian doctrine of creation and use of Scripture)
21. 1 *confutatio*
21. 2–5 *narratio* (redemption)
22. 1–2 *confirmatio* (Rule of Truth)
23. 1–31. 2 *narratio* (various teachers)
31. 3–4 *peroratio*

²¹ Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed*, pp. 12–13, claims that Chapters 18–20 refer not to Marcosians but rather to Valentinians in general.

Irenaeus is by no means objective when he describes the doctrines of his adversaries. In the course of the narration, he refers to their opinions as their ‘lies’, ‘falsifications’, ‘distortions’, ‘absurdities’. Sometimes his tone is more aggressive, sometimes more neutral.

Irenaeus’s claim in the preface that he has personal contacts and firsthand information about Valentinians is a means of establishing authority in the eyes of his audience and rendering them sympathetic. In classical rhetoric, this is known as *ethos*.²² In the *exordium*, Irenaeus uses three conventional ways of gaining authority. In addition to his status as an expert on Valentinian doctrines unlike anyone before him,²³ he also has authority as a bishop. But if he addresses an audience other than his own flock, he must gain trust by some other means. Therefore, he relies on greater authorities. In presenting a metaphor on forgery, he announces that ‘with regard to such people, one greater than we has said [...]’. Dominic J. Unger reckons this ‘one’ to be Irenaeus’s predecessor in Lyon, Bishop Potinus.²⁴ However, an even more powerful authority is the apostolic tradition preserved in the Scriptures, to which Irenaeus refers in the very beginning of his preface when he quotes I Timothy 1. 4:

Certain people are discarding the Truth and introducing deceitful myths and endless genealogies, which, as the Apostle says, promote speculations rather than the divine training that is in the faith.

Hinting that Paul was already opposing these same Gnostics that he is now, Irenaeus claims to be in line with Paul, the greatest authority in the New Testament after Jesus.²⁵ Finally, Irenaeus resorts to the conventional form of flattery. He

²² Edward P. J. Corbett, *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. 34–35.

²³ In *Against Heresies*, 4 praef. 2, Irenaeus implies that some people have tried to refute Valentinians without success: ‘The man, however, who would undertake their conversion, must possess an accurate knowledge of their systems or schemes of doctrine. For it is impossible for any one to heal the sick, if he has no knowledge of the disease of the patients. This was the reason that my predecessors — much superior men to myself, too — were unable, notwithstanding, to refute the Valentinians satisfactorily, because they were ignorant of these men’s system’ (translations of Books 2–5 of *Against Heresies* are from vol. I of *Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1867–73)).

²⁴ St Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against the Heresies Book I*, trans. and annotated by Dominic J. Unger, rev. by John J. Dillon (New York: Paulist, 1992), p. 128 n. 12.

²⁵ It might well be due to Irenaeus’s influence that this passage was so long interpreted as a refutation of Gnostics although now it is generally admitted that there were no developed Gnostic systems when this deutero-Pauline letter was written, around the turn of the first century.

belittles his own rhetorical skills and suggests that his readers are more competent than himself:

From us who live among the Celts and are accustomed to transact practically everything in a barbarous tongue, you cannot expect rhetorical art, which we have never learned, or the craft of writing, in which we have not had practice, or elegant style and persuasiveness, with which we are not familiar. Rather, you must welcome in charity what in charity we write to you — simply and truthfully and unaffectedly. You yourself, as one more competent than we, will develop these points, receiving from us, as it were, only the seeds and beginnings. In the broad range of your mind you will reap abundant fruit from our brief statements, and will forcefully present to your people what we have reported but feebly.²⁶

A statement like this is in itself a rhetorical device; with it, Irenaeus gives the impression that he is more interested in truth than fine words.²⁷ Such a humble attitude is not present in the refutation itself where Irenaeus firmly distinguishes false opinions from true doctrine which he himself puts together. In the preface, Irenaeus thus presents himself as an expert in all fields: heretical doctrines as well as the true Christian faith. He also identifies his main adversaries as the followers of Valentinus and Ptolemaeus and alludes to some arguments for rejecting their doctrines. I begin the analysis of the arguments with the origin and kinship of Valentinianism with paganism.

Originating in Error

Irenaeus wanted to prove that there was nothing original in Valentinian beliefs, but that they were simply borrowed from Greek myths. The most thorough and explicit argumentation for this occurs in *Against Heresies*, 2. 14: Valentinians have adopted Greek theogonies, only changing some names, resulting in a motley garment sewed out of several philosophical ideas.

Despite Valentinians' close contacts with philosophical doctrines, Irenaeus does not call them 'philosophers'. Instead, he equates them with sophists: Valentinians are 'more anxious to be sophists of words than disciples of the truth'.²⁸ Plato had disregarded sophists, and the same attitude was shared by many Middle Platonists,

²⁶ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 1 praef. 3, trans. by Unger, p. 22.

²⁷ Schoedel, 'Philosophy', p. 27.

²⁸ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 3. 24. 2.

most notably Philo and Numenius.²⁹ Antipathies in the New Testament towards ‘cleverly invented fables’ (II Peter 1. 16) and ‘wisdom of this world’ (I Corinthians 1. 20) may also have provoked Irenaeus to use the term ‘sophist’ in a pejorative sense. When he accuses Valentinians of seeking financial compensation for their teaching, it must be understood in the context of traditions about sophists. It is unlikely that Valentinians were ‘unwilling to teach these things to all in public but only to those who are able to pay a large sum for such mysteries’.³⁰ In that case Irenaeus could not have become acquainted with their doctrines to such a profound extent as he claims in the preface since it is impossible to imagine him financing his opponents in order to hear their ‘false’ and ‘wicked’ teaching. Characterizing Valentinians as sophists was another way of portraying them as empty, deceitful, and senseless beings whose cause is not truth.

Irenaeus does not merely associate Valentinians with pagans; he even considers them *worse* than pagans.³¹ He turns Paul’s attack on pagans in Romans 1. 20 against Valentinians claiming that even pagans learned from creation that God is the Creator whereas Valentinians call the creator the fruit of a defect thus rendering themselves more blasphemous than any other human beings.³²

It is not enough for Irenaeus to demonstrate that Valentinians are basically pagans in new clothes. He also wants to show that they have connections to all other heresies. Justin had made Simon Magus the arch-heretic, the first one to deviate from the Christian faith.³³ Irenaeus’s invention was to create a succession of heresies starting from Simon reaching up to his own time.³⁴ Just as the truth was handed down through the apostolic succession, so was the error mediated from generation to generation through the heretics. Error had manifested itself in multiple forms over the course of time, but the essence had always remained the same: ‘all those who in any way adulterate the truth and do injury to the preaching of the Church are the disciples and successors of Simon, the magician of Samaria. For even though they do not acknowledge the name of their teacher in order to mislead

²⁹ Le Boulluec, *La Notion d’hérésie*, I, 141–44.

³⁰ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 1. 4. 3.

³¹ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 2. 9.

³² Le Boulluec, *La Notion d’hérésie*, I, 125.

³³ Justin Martyr, *I. apologia*, 26. 2.

³⁴ ‘Now Simon, the Samaritan, from whom all heresies got their start [...]’ (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 1. 23. 2); ‘[This spiritual man] shall also judge the vain speeches of the perverse Gnostics, by showing that they are the disciples of Simon Magus’ (ibid., 4. 33. 3).

others, yet it is his doctrine they teach'.³⁵ In this way, Valentinians were blamed for all possible erroneous doctrines whether they acknowledged them or not. True Christians were urged to reject Valentinians just as the first apostles had refuted their spiritual ancestor, Simon. Earlier heretics were 'mothers and fathers and ancestors' of Valentinians.³⁶ The use of genealogical terms appeals to the idea that like produces like. Heretics can only generate other heretics. Likewise, Valentinians are fundamentally rotten since they are the result of distorted procreation.

As a by-product, Irenaeus happened to model a version of the history of the early Church which turned out to be surprisingly persistent. According to him, in the beginning there was the pure and uncontaminated apostolic faith. Heresies came into existence only later as deviations from the truth. Thus, Christian history is a story of decline.³⁷ This view dominated scholarly work until Walter Bauer turned the roles upside down in the 1930s with his book *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*.³⁸ Only since then have scholars started to realize that 'orthodoxy' in the earliest Christian period existed only as an ideal construction that theologians such as Irenaeus retrojected into the past.

Fellow Christians?

By comparing Valentinians with pagans, Irenaeus intended to reveal whom they resembled. Far more crucial, however, was to make clear who they were not. Valentinians shared the authoritative writings, ritual practices, and central figures with other Christians. Irenaeus's message was that while Valentinians might look like us, they in fact are not at all like us: they 'speak the same language we do, but intend different meanings'.³⁹ His description of Valentinians as wolves in sheepskin

³⁵ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 1. 27. 4. In contrast to this, in 3. 4. 3 Irenaeus says that Valentinians did not have any existence prior to Valentinus. Even though in the first book he is persistent in lumping together all his adversaries, he does not point to the kinship of Valentinians with earlier heretics in the context when he underlines their novelty.

³⁶ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 1. 31. 3.

³⁷ King, *What Is Gnosticism?*, pp. 36–37.

³⁸ Walter Bauer, *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im älteren Christentum* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1934).

³⁹ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 1 praef. 1. This view used to dominate modern research until recently. See, e.g., Sagnard, *La Gnose*, p. 95: 'ils [les Valentiniens] représentent le danger le plus immédiat, par le fait de leur habileté à se déguiser en chrétiens'.

crystallizes this, echoing Jesus’s warnings in the Gospels.⁴⁰ He admits that his adversaries talk about Jesus Christ but hastens to add that they abuse this good name for disseminating their own teaching.⁴¹ Irenaeus refuses to call them Christians but instead refers to them by the name of some of their teachers: followers of Valentinus, Basilides, Marcus, and so on. Irenaeus is aware of the power of naming: those who name distance themselves from those who are named.

The four gospels and the Pauline epistles are the main source of argumentation for Irenaeus, but because his adversaries also rely on the same texts, refuting them becomes more challenging. Irenaeus needs to demonstrate that his interpretation of the sacred texts is superior to that of his opponents. Correct exegesis is so important to Irenaeus that he devotes a great deal of space to this issue. First, he describes the doctrinal system of his opponents, then the biblical passages on which they are based, and finally refutes their interpretation.⁴² He accuses them mainly of transferring and rearranging biblical passages and taking them out of context. The result is a composition that is no longer recognizable. With the help of a metaphor of an image made of precious stones he explains that although the pieces are truthful and valuable, incorrect composition necessarily destroys the originally clear picture.⁴³ According to Irenaeus, since his adversaries are skilful in the art of speech, they appeal to people with ‘specious argumentation’ and ‘cleverness with words’ but they are ‘wicked interpreters of genuine words’ who ‘falsify the Lord’s words’ and ‘bring many to ruin’.⁴⁴ Throughout the exordium he pairs truth and error, true and false. Contrasts and contradictions are indeed powerful rhetorical tools. Since contrasting propositions are incompatible, if one can prove that his or her assertion is true, then the other one is necessarily false.

The Many-Headed Hydra

In the preface, Irenaeus promises to show his readers how ‘utterly absurd, inconsistent and incongruous with the Truth their [i.e. Valentinians’] statements are’. The

⁴⁰ John 10. 12; Luke 10. 3; Matthew 10. 16.

⁴¹ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 1. 27. 4. Valentinian writings unambiguously manifest Christian identity. For example, in addition to the reference to Jesus and his apostles, the *Gospel of Philip* (NHC, II, 3) repeatedly speaks about ‘us’ as Christians, see 52. 21–24, 74. 13–14.

⁴² See Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 1. 8–9, 18–20.

⁴³ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 1. 8. 1.

⁴⁴ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 1 praef. 1.

notion of inconsistency is based on a maxim that the truth is unified. If Valentinians disagree with each other in many instances, as Irenaeus often comments, they cannot represent the Truth since ‘the entire Church has one and the same faith throughout the whole world’.⁴⁵ For him, their internal disagreement alone is sufficient proof of their error:

the fathers of this myth themselves differ from each other, coming as they do from different spirits of error. And indeed, from this fact one can very accurately recognize — even before giving a demonstration [of their error] — the firm Truth preached by the Church and the falsehood fabricated by those people.⁴⁶

With the help of similar arguments, Christian writers — also Valentinians — refuted philosophical traditions. In the *Tripartite Tractate*, a Valentinian document from the Nag Hammadi library, there is a doxography of five theories about the cause of all things.⁴⁷ The author condemns the wisdom of philosophers as vain, arrogant, and imaginary since ‘they thought that they had attained the truth, when they had (only) attained error’. Not only did the philosophers disagree with each other, but nothing at all in Greek culture was in agreement. Therefore, they propounded nothing other than opinions.⁴⁸ This kind of reasoning easily turns against the one who proposed it if his adversaries can show internal disagreement among his own group too, as Celsus did in his polemic against Christians. Early Christian apologists tended to deny or tone down quarrels between Christians which would weaken their credibility in the eyes of their suspicious pagan audience. Another solution was to argue that only those around the one defending himself were true Christians and the others were not worthy of that name.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 1. 10. 3.

⁴⁶ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 1. 9. 5.

⁴⁷ *Tripartite Tractate* (NHC, I, 5), 109. There is a close parallel to the *Tripartite Tractate* in *Eugnostos* according to which philosophers have formulated three opinions about the ordering of the world. These opinions disagree with each other, hence they have not reached the truth. *Eugnostos* (NHC, III, 3), 71.

⁴⁸ For the condemnation of philosophy, see Dunderberg, *Beyond Gnosticism*, chap. 11.

⁴⁹ Origen notes that there is nothing wrong with having multiple sects and schools as philosophers do. However, he emphasizes that some of the sects mentioned by Celsus as Christians ‘do not have in common with us even the name of Jesus’ (Origenes, *Contra Celsum*, 3. 13). Likewise, not all those who accept Jesus are true Christians: ‘neither will they who annihilate the doctrine of providence be deemed true philosophers, nor those true Christians who introduce monstrous

At every turn, Irenaeus emphasizes that the school of Valentinus is split into several factions. He compares them to the Lernaean hydra, the persistent monster with one body and several heads.⁵⁰ Once you cut off one of the heads, another one grows to replace it. In Chapter 11 of *Against Heresies*, Irenaeus tries to demonstrate discrepancies between Valentinian teachers who ‘do not say the same things about the same subject, but contradict themselves in regard to things and names’ by presenting four variations of the basic ontological myth. At the end, he comments that not only are the names different, but the Valentinians cannot even agree as regards the nature of the first principle, whether it is a masculo-feminine or genderless being and with or without a consort.

Alain Le Boulluec claims that Irenaeus treats Valentinians unjustly when he tries to present their myths as a coherent doctrine and then points out diverging tendencies from this imaginary complete system.⁵¹ By means of this systematization alien to mysticism, differences are turned into contradictions.⁵² Frederik Wisse also draws attention to the non-doctrinal nature of many Gnostic documents:

By taking the Gnostic holy books as credal statements, a gross injustice was done to the syncretistic, mystical faith of the sectarians. By taking the differences in mythological detail as doctrinal differences, Gnosticism came to look like an absurdly fragmented movement. [...] Instead of expecting the Gnostic tractates to contain coherent theological systems, we should look at them more as mystical poetry.⁵³

Thus, Irenaeus’s starting point for creating an image of Valentinians as the enemy is to force them into a mould and judge them according to a set of criteria that is not natural to them.

Immoral Behaviour

Irenaeus often exploits an ad hominem argument: since his opponents are by nature evil, everything they do or say is false. He relates accusations of licentious

inventions, which are disapproved of by those who are the disciples of Jesus’ (Origenes, *Contra Celsum*, 5. 61). The translations are from vol. IV of *Ante-Nicene Fathers*.

⁵⁰ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 1. 30. 15.

⁵¹ Le Boulluec, *La Notion d’hérésie*, I, 159.

⁵² Le Boulluec, *La Notion d’hérésie*, I, 162.

⁵³ Frederik Wisse, ‘The Nag Hammadi Library and the Heresiologist’, *Vigiliae Christianae*, 25 (1971), 205–23 (pp. 221–22).

behaviour to Valentinians (1. 6. 3), Marcosians (1. 13),⁵⁴ and Carpocratians (1. 25. 3–4). Valentinians, says Irenaeus, do things that are forbidden in the Scriptures: eating food offered to idols, indulging in carnal pleasures, and defiling women. According to him, this is the consequence of their doctrine of three classes of humankind: because Valentinians believe they represent the spiritual class, they will be saved regardless of what practices they may have engaged in and therefore they can do whatever they like.⁵⁵ Other Christians consist of psychics, who can be saved only by means of faith and good works.⁵⁶

Irenaeus's accusations do not seem justified in the light of Valentinian documents. Such immoral behaviour is nowhere attested or encouraged: on the contrary, we find moral exhortations addressed to the inner circle. In the ethical discourse in the *Gospel of Truth* 32. 31–33. 32, readers are exhorted not only to avoid sinning but also encouraged in missionary activity including teaching and charity. Several times they are reminded not to return to their old way of life which they have abandoned. They are to remember their heavenly origin and act accordingly: 'Do the will of your Father, for you are from him.' Similarly, Ptolemy in his *Letter to Flora* ponders over the true meaning of the commandments: 'He [the Saviour] wanted us to be circumcised, not in regard to our physical foreskin but in regard to our spiritual heart; to keep the Sabbath, for he wishes us to be idle in regard to evil works; to fast, not in physical fasting but in spiritual, in which there is

⁵⁴ Irenaeus stresses that Marcus appeals especially to women who fall under his spell. He claims to have information from a deacon of his own circles whose wife was seduced by Marcus. In fact, this only reveals that Marcus had female followers, a fact that alone was enough to raise suspicions — even Jesus had encountered murmuring due to his contacts with women. Moreover, Irenaeus's choice of words echoes the concern for women prone to false teaching in I and II Timothy. It is part of his strategy to identify his opponents with the wicked teachers in the New Testament as he did already in the very opening lines of *Against Heresies*.

⁵⁵ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 1. 6. 2–3. From the rhetorical point of view, Irenaeus's syllogism is not valid. Even though he could argue that licentiousness or strict asceticism derive from Valentinian anthropology, it is not a valid argument in the opposite way: does that particular cause invariably produce only these two effects?

⁵⁶ Elaine Pagels has shown that Irenaeus's account is a misinterpretation of Valentinian eschatology as preserved in the Excerpts of Theodotus. See Elaine Pagels, 'Conflicting Versions of Valentinian Eschatology: Irenaeus' Treatise vs. the Excerpts from Theodotus', *Harvard Theological Review*, 67 (1974), 35–53. On the Valentinian concept of sin and eschatological views, see also Michel R. Desjardins, *Sin in Valentinianism* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990).

abstinence from everything evil.⁵⁷ Valentinian texts do not state that everything is permitted for those who are saved. Yet Irenaeus sees the Valentinian doctrine as dangerous and is concerned for some possible interpretations of it. For polemical purposes, he has invented licentious Valentinians committing every kind of wicked deed on the basis of this doctrine. In fact, he takes up the debate already seen in the New Testament. Did Paul intend that Christians who had been liberated from the yoke of the law were free to sin? Definitely not,⁵⁸ yet there is a short path from nonchalance to deliberate wrongdoing. Thus, as polemics against Paul, the Epistle of James declares that ‘faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead’ (James 2. 17).

In the case of the Carpocratians, Irenaeus admits the tendency for exaggeration when he doubts ‘whether these impious, unlawful and forbidden acts are really practiced by them’, but insists that they have, at any rate, written down an exhortation to do all the deeds.⁵⁹ Although there could have been individuals behaving in the way Irenaeus portrayed, his account is rather a hypothetical consequence of Valentinian anthropological views. Sexual slander was an extremely common device for denigrating the authority of a person or a group in antiquity, as Jennifer Wright Knust has illustrated with examples from the Roman authors, the Bible, apologies, and heresiologies.⁶⁰ Historians evaluated Roman emperors according to their virtues or vices and explained historical events in terms of the moral attributes of persons instead of social and economic forces.⁶¹ Paul coupled gentiles with sexual immorality, laying the foundation for the Christian tradition of defining boundaries in sexual terms.⁶² First pagans, then Jews and other Christians were characterized as sexually immoral idolaters.⁶³ True Christians were able to master desire whereas those who reject God are portrayed as incapable of virtue.

⁵⁷ Ptolemaeus, *Ad Floram*, 5. 11–13.

⁵⁸ See Romans 6. 15.

⁵⁹ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 1. 25. 5.

⁶⁰ Jennifer Wright Knust, *Abandoned to Lust: Sexual Slander and Ancient Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).

⁶¹ Wright Knust, *Abandoned to Lust*, p. 16.

⁶² Sexual issues pervade Christian discourse in antiquity: virginity, marriage, divorce, sexual renunciation, adultery, desire, prostitutes, and *porneia*. Wright Knust, *Abandoned to Lust*, pp. 52–53.

⁶³ Not only ‘heretics’ were accused of licentiousness but also ‘apostolic’ Christians, as the *Gospel of Judas* shows.

Sexual ethics is not the only act of immorality that Irenaeus attacks. This is what he says about the behaviour of his Valentinian adversaries:

Food sacrificed to idols they eat without scruple, thinking they in no way defile themselves by it. And they are the first to assemble at every heathen festival held in honor of the idols for the sake of pleasure, with the result that some do not abstain even from the spectacle loathsome to God and men where men fight with wild beasts and each other in homicidal fashion. Others give themselves up to carnal pleasures immoderately.⁶⁴

Here he clearly echoes the so-called ‘Apostolic Decree’. According to the Acts of the Apostles 15, early quarrels between Christians were settled in a meeting in Jerusalem where each party agreed on what can be required from pagan converts: they ought to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals, and from sexual immorality (*porneia*).⁶⁵

Irenaeus himself reproduces this list in *Against Heresies*, 3. 12. 14, omitting the meat of strangled animals and adding instead of it the Golden Rule as the fourth element. Eating food offered to idols he attaches to heretics on several occasions.⁶⁶ In the case of the Nicolaitans, he refers to the Book of Revelation saying that ‘what sort of people they are is fully exposed by the Apocalypse of John, for they assert that there is no difference between committing fornication and eating food sacrificed to idols’.⁶⁷ Thus he finds proof that in the earliest Christian communities, heretics already violated the apostolic decree. Since all heresies derive from the same root, they all indulge in the same wicked deeds: *porneia*, food offered to idols, and consummation of blood.⁶⁸ By pointing to the Apostolic Decree when talking about the immorality of Valentinians, Irenaeus indicates that these people cannot follow even the minimum requirements of being a Christian. Le Boulluec has

⁶⁴ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 1. 6. 3.

⁶⁵ The list occurs in Acts 15 twice. Verse 20 reads ‘ἀλλὰ ἐπιστεῖλαι αὐτοῖς τοῦ ἀπέχεσθαι τῶν ἀλισγημάτων τῶν εἰδώλων καὶ τῆς πορνείας καὶ τοῦ πνικτοῦ καὶ τοῦ αἵματος’ whereas verse 29 goes ‘ἀπέχεσθαι εἰδωλοθύτων καὶ αἵματος καὶ πνικτῶν καὶ πορνείας’. Fornication, blood, and strangled (animals) are the same in both lists, but instead of the technical term ‘meat offered to idols’ the former has the broader ‘what is polluted by idols’.

⁶⁶ Followers of Basilides (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 1. 24. 5); Nicolaitans (1. 26. 3); those who ‘got start their from Basilides and Carpocrates’ (1. 28. 2).

⁶⁷ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 1. 26. 3.

⁶⁸ The Golden Rule in Irenaeus’s list hints that Irenaeus had an ethical rather than literal interpretation of the original Apostolic Decree. It is very probable that the bloody spectacles that people rushed to see equals blood in his list.

pointed out that Irenaeus does not here resort to what Paul teaches on the subject in 1 Corinthians 8 which is more tolerant regarding differences in praxis.⁶⁹ Paul’s liberal attitude does not suit heresiologists and apologists who need strict rules for drawing boundaries.

Mastering the Figures of Speech

Irenaeus’s success was hardly based exclusively on the theological results of his analysis. Logic and reason as such appeal mainly to other theologians. Doctrinal divergences between different groups were often not at all clear to ordinary Christians. The mere listing of Valentinian theological fallacies was not enough for Irenaeus to win the readers over to his side. But Irenaeus was successful in appealing to people’s sentiments or, in a rhetorical language, combining *logos* and *pathos*. Many scholars have praised Irenaeus’s subtle style. Unger especially draws attention to the variety of expressions that Irenaeus masters. For example, in Book 1 he distinguishes the opinions of his adversaries from his own by using the phrase ‘they say’, but he employs at least fifteen different verbs for this.⁷⁰

The passage about Marcosian numerology and theology of alphabets in 1. 15. 4–5 has often been highlighted as an example of Irenaeus’s ‘genuine eloquence’.⁷¹ The arguments of the refutation are based on reason, such as the logical conflict between the nature and acts of the first divine beings and the consequences of comparing God to the letters which did not always exist. However, on the level of the arguments, Irenaeus already appeals to the emotions of his audience by claiming that these opinions are not only illogical but also blasphemous. Pathos continues on the level of the style. The passage begins with a startling exclamation: ‘woe, alas!’ Among the notable elements that follow are the abundance of rhetorical questions⁷² and the change from the third person to the second person: Irenaeus is now — together with his readers — addressing Marcus himself. He uses

⁶⁹ Le Boulluec, *La Notion d’hérésie*, I, 132.

⁷⁰ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, trans. by Unger and rev. by Dillon, p. 7.

⁷¹ Sagnard, *La Gnose*, pp. 72–74; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, trans. by Unger and rev. by Dillon, p. 117 n. 26.

⁷² For example, three successive clauses which all use the expression ‘who would put up with [...]’.

such rhetorical devices as parallelism,⁷³ antithesis,⁷⁴ parenthesis or apostrophe,⁷⁵ apposition,⁷⁶ anaphora,⁷⁷ periphrasis,⁷⁸ and irony.⁷⁹

Irenaeus resorts to irony quite often. Ridiculing one's adversary is indeed a powerful means of refutation. A classic example is in *Against Heresies*, 1. 4. 4 where he describes the Valentinian etiological cosmogonic myth according to which the material world was formed from the passions of Wisdom, her fear, grief, and perplexity. From her tears came every moist substance, and from her laughter light. Irenaeus taunts their myth by commenting that, in his opinion, only seas and other salty waters could have originated from the tears of Wisdom. Sweet waters instead must have been emitted from some other source, for example, her perspiration. Furthermore, he comments that since some waters are hot and pungent, 'you ought to know what Intention did and from what member these were emitted!'

Later on, in *Against Heresies*, 11. 4, Irenaeus mocks the Valentinian names for the first divine entities. He refers to an anonymous Valentinian as the 'renowned

⁷³ 'unutterable and unthinkable [...] incorporeal and immaterial [...] essence and substance [...] blasphemy and impiety'.

⁷⁴ 'Silence who garrulously utters such things, who gives a name to the Unnameable, who explains the Unspeakable, who searches out the Unsearchable [...] the Father, who comprehends all things, but is Himself incomprehensible [...] the power, which you assert is indivisible, you divide'.

⁷⁵ 'For the body of Truth, according to you, Marcus, was begotten later than Cadmus, and so later than those who existed before him.' Parenthesis is the insertion of a grammatically independent phrase within a sentence: *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period 330 B.C. – A.D. 400*, ed. by Stanley E. Porter (Leiden: Brill, 1997), p. 147. Apostrophe means turning from the general audience to address a specific group or person: *ibid.*, p. 139.

⁷⁶ 'Or who will put up with you who confine the Creator of all things, the Framer and Maker, the Word of God, to figures and numbers — now thirty, now twenty-four, now only six — and then divide Him into four combinations and thirty characters?' Apposition means placing side by side two coordinate elements, the second of which serves as an explanation or modification of the first: Corbett, *Classical Rhetoric*, p. 468.

⁷⁷ 'τὸ γὰρ σῶμα αὐτῆς κατὰ σε, Μάρκε, μεταγενέστερον μὲν Κάδμου, καὶ τῶν πρὸ αὐτοῦ μεταγενέστερον δὲ τῶν τὰ λοιπὰ προστεθεικότων στοιχείᾳ· μεταγενέστερον δὲ καὶ παντοῦ.' Anaphora occurs when successive clauses begin with the same word or group of words: *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric*, ed. by Porter, p. 131.

⁷⁸ 'You yourself become a false Daedalus.' Daedalus was a skillful artificer in the Greek mythology. He was said to have created the labyrinth in Crete where Minotaur was kept. Periphrasis is a substitution of a descriptive word or phrase for a proper name or of a proper name for a quality associated with the name: Corbett, *Classical Rhetoric*, p. 485.

⁷⁹ 'Then Father of all things will consist in accordance with his resemblance to the Word, as you say, of thirty characters and four combinations.'

teacher’ who speaks about the primal Tetrad, calls it unnameable and unutterable, yet gives it the names Oneness, Unity, Monad, and Unit. Irenaeus gets rather overheated about this. According to him, this system is a mere fabrication and the names were attached by the teacher himself. Nothing, he continues, could then prohibit anyone else from proposing any names whatsoever for the system. They could equally well be called Gourd, Utter-Emptiness, Cucumber, and Pumpkin. ‘For if one must give names according to one’s pleasure, who forbids the use of these names, since they are much more credible and in vogue and known by all?’ Irenaeus’s logic seems to be that if these names are not attested by the Scripture, if they do not derive from God’s self-revelation, they are mere human fabrication and must be rejected.

Another powerful figure that Irenaeus utilizes is a metaphor of his adversaries as a beast. He uses the figure of *prosopopoeia* (personification), endowing abstractions with human abilities, when he portrays Error in the preface of Book 1: ‘It craftily decks itself out in an attractive dress, and thus, by an outward false appearance, presents itself to the more ignorant, truer than Truth itself.’ Irenaeus claims that Valentinians want to hide their true nature. They are like wolves snatching sheep who fail to recognize them ‘because of the treachery of their sheepskin’. In Chapter 1. 8, he presents a parable about a skilfully made beautiful image of a king which someone destroys, then rearranges the pieces rather clumsily into a form of a dog or a fox and misleads inexperienced people into believing that this is the original picture of the king. In this way Irenaeus wants to create a picture of a formerly clear and coherent doctrine which Valentinians have deliberately blurred.

Irenaeus returns to this imagery again in the last chapter of Book 1 by comparing Valentinians to a little fox with an ill-formed body. This final parable tells about a wild beast which used to hide itself in the forest, but since the forest has been cut down and the beast has been exposed, it is easy to guard oneself against its attacks and finally kill it. With this effective illustration, Irenaeus tries to convince his readers that his book has reached its goal; the false teaching of Valentinians has been revealed, and once the error has been made manifest, there is no need for more words to refute it. Paradoxically, however, Irenaeus now starts to set the ground for the following books where he promises to answer every one of the teachings of his adversaries and denounce them so that he ‘may not merely expose the beast, but may also wound it from all sides’.

Irenaeus's Anti-Valentinian Polemic in Context

Irenaeus, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Epiphanius, and other proponents of the right interpretation of Christian doctrine were not the only ones refuting Valentinians. Several documents from the Nag Hammadi library contain polemics against 'orthodox' Christianity but also against other Gnostic groups.⁸⁰ The *Testimony of Truth* is the only one of them that explicitly names Valentinians in the list of the groups that are being refuted. The author represents an unidentifiable Gnostic group which is highly influenced by Valentinian doctrines.⁸¹ Unfortunately, the passage that contains polemic against different erroneous views is very fragmentary. There is only left a short reference to Ogdoad, which is a Valentinian term, and to a teacher who 'completed the course of Valentinus'.⁸² Error, confusion, and 'vain knowledge' are said to characterize his disciples.⁸³ Like Irenaeus, this author calls his adversaries 'heretics' (ἑρετικοί).⁸⁴ A familiar argument occurs on page 58: 'they do not agree with each other'.⁸⁵ In accordance with Irenaeus and other Christian as well as non-Christian writers of the second century, the author of the *Testimony of Truth* claims that inconsistency and contradictory statements of his opponents reveal their error. Elsewhere in the text, his main concerns are the praxis of water baptism and the sexual immorality of his opponents; wicked desire and

⁸⁰ The *Apocalypse of Peter* (NHC, VII, 3) and the *Testimony of Truth* (NHC, IX, 3) seem to target some of their attacks on the Christian authorities. *Melchizedek* (NHC, IX, 1), as Birger A. Pearson notes, is a rare example among Gnostic texts of a primitive Christology that refutes docetic views. The *Second Treatise of the Great Seth* (NHC, VII, 2) instead promotes docetic Christology and claims that their group had been hated and persecuted by fellow Christians. Birger A. Pearson, 'Anti-Heretical Warnings in Codex IX from Nag Hammadi', in *Gnosticism, Judaism and Egyptian Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), pp. 183–93.

⁸¹ Birger A. Pearson, *Nag Hammadi Codices IX and X* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), pp. 118–19, even identifies the author as Julius Cassianus. Annie and Jean-Pierre Mahé do not concur in this but, at any rate, demonstrate how deeply Valentinian teaching was rooted in the author's theology. Annie Mahé and Jean-Pierre Mahé, *Le Témoignage Véritable* (NH IX, 3): *Gnose et martyre*, Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi, 23 (Leuven: Peeters, 1996), pp. 26–69. The Coptic citations in notes 82–83 and 85 are from their edition.

⁸² 'ⲁϣϣⲟⲕ ⲉⲃ[ⲟ]ⲗ ⲙⲡⲡⲟⲩ ⲙⲡⲟⲩⲁⲗⲓⲛⲧⲛⲟϥ'. *Testimony of Truth*, 56. 1–2.

⁸³ 'ⲙⲛ ⲡⲟⲩϥⲟⲩⲛ ⲓⲥⲧⲱⲣⲱⲓⲧ'. *Testimony of Truth*, 57. 5–6.

⁸⁴ *Testimony of Truth*, 59. 4. However, it must be kept in mind that *haireisis* did not have only negative connotations; it could as well mean 'adherents of a school' in a more neutral manner.

⁸⁵ The formulation is exactly the same as in *Eugnostos*: 'ⲛϥⲉⲑⲥⲱⲙⲡⲱⲛⲓ ⲓⲁⲛ ⲉⲛⲉ[ϣ]ⲉⲣⲱⲩ'. *Testimony of Truth*, 58. 1–2.

defilement characterize them. For this author, every kind of sexual activity is licentious, even 'taking wives and begetting children', of which he accuses both Valentinians and those who share Irenaeus's view on orthodoxy.⁸⁶ Both groups deviate from the ideals of the author, and thus, both are labelled heretics. The catalogue of heresies with well-known names and the keen interest in the concept of 'heresy' in the *Testimony of Truth* evidence a mirror image of the great heresiologists, the other side of their arguments.⁸⁷

I shall finally provide an example of similar methods and accusations that were now targeted against all Christians. Celsus wrote his *True Word*, a refutation of Christianity, around the same time that Irenaeus composed his work.⁸⁸ He was familiar with the Hebrew Bible as well as New Testament writings and some other Christian literature and was aware of the existence of different Christian groups.⁸⁹ Like Irenaeus, he knew the doctrines he was attacking. He did not rely on popular commonplaces about his adversaries as his predecessors had done, especially regarding sexual ethics.⁹⁰ Celsus's main charges against Christians are strikingly similar to those of Irenaeus against Valentinians: inconsistency, borrowing from Greek philosophy, dubious origin, and appealing to women. In his opinion, the Hebrew Bible is full of stupid fables; it presents silly cosmogony and sometimes borrows inadequately from Greek philosophers.⁹¹ Jesus he calls a wicked sorcerer.⁹² Christians are fools, unable to understand philosophical truths, and they preach their message only to other fools.⁹³ However, they do not act out of ignorance but intentionally seduce people away from truth so that their own incompetency may not be exposed.⁹⁴ Celsus pointed several times to what he thought to be inconsistencies in Christian

⁸⁶ *Testimony of Truth*, 30. 2–5, 58. 3–4.

⁸⁷ Pearson, 'Anti-Heretical Warnings', pp. 192–93.

⁸⁸ Stephen Benko, *Pagan Rome and the Early Christians* (London: Batsford, 1984), pp. 147–48.

⁸⁹ Celsus, *On the True Doctrine: A Discourse Against the Christians*, trans. and intro. by R. Joseph Hoffmann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 38, 42.

⁹⁰ See Benko's summary (*Pagan Rome*, pp. 54–78) about the charges of immorality and cannibalism. In Irenaeus's defence, one must note that the accusations against Valentinians about their immoral behaviour represented only a minor part of his overall argumentation.

⁹¹ Origenes, *Contra Celsum*, 4. 36, 4. 38, 4. 48–50, 6. 49–50, 6. 58, 6. 61–63.

⁹² Origenes, *Contra Celsum*, 1. 71, 2. 32, 2. 49, 8. 41. Compare with the way Irenaeus portrays Marcus in *Against Heresies*, 1. 13.

⁹³ Origenes, *Contra Celsum*, 3. 44, 3. 50, 3. 55, 3. 59.

⁹⁴ Origenes, *Contra Celsum*, 3. 75–78. Compare to Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 1 praef. 1.

argumentation.⁹⁵ They cannot even agree with themselves as the multitude of quarrelsome sects proves: they lack unity.⁹⁶ Celsus and Irenaeus also consider true doctrine as old and rely on the succession of authoritative teaching, and they regard novelties as lacking authority and, at their best, only degenerated versions of the old. Whereas Valentinians represented perverted new doctrine for Irenaeus, Celsus labelled all Christians as part of a deteriorated, quasi-philosophical movement. What offended Celsus most about Christians was their detachment from every established tradition. They behaved like a nation without a nation's history and traditions, yet they sought allegiance from their members to traditions and history of their own making.⁹⁷ Irenaeus and Celsus stood on opposite sides, but they both portrayed themselves as the defenders of tradition and authority.

It is thus obvious that the strategies or even the arguments of Irenaeus's refutation of Valentinians were not unique nor were they restricted only to the use of Christian heresiologists. However, the relatively few occurrences of polemics against other Christian groups in the Valentinian texts raise questions. Is it only due to their lack of interest in doctrinal issues?⁹⁸ Or did they consider themselves as separate from the rest of the Church or even the cause of division? Did there exist a schism in relation to the followers of Valentinus before the efforts of the heresiologists? Karen King has reminded us that theological differences are not always a sign of a conflict relationship.⁹⁹ What we do know for sure is that Irenaeus's aim was to create doctrinal unity within the Church and he achieved it by introducing schism which ultimately led to the exclusion of Valentinians. Battle lines were now set. After Irenaeus there was no stepping beyond the borderlines he had fixed regarding the school of Valentinus.

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⁹⁵ Benko, *Pagan Rome*, pp. 154–55, lists many such accusations, e.g., Christians honouring the prophets of the Hebrew Bible but despising other prophets or objecting to the worship of pagan gods but at the same time worshipping a man who lived only recently and claiming this to be in line with monotheism.

⁹⁶ Origenes, *Contra Celsum*, 3. 10, 3. 12, 3. 13, 5. 63.

⁹⁷ Celsus, *On the True Doctrine*, ed. by Hoffmann, p. 34.

⁹⁸ The most notable exception to this is Ptolemy's *Letter to Flora* which is both doctrinally oriented and polemic.

⁹⁹ King, *What Is Gnosticism?*, pp. 32–33.

IMAGES OF THE OTHERS IN TERTULLIAN

Anders-Christian Jacobsen

Tertullian wrote extensively about the others.¹ He wrote about how he understood Christianity; about whom he considered to be true and false Christians — orthodox and heretics; how he understood and evaluated non-Christian adherents of Roman and Greek religions (the so-called pagans) and Jews and these groups' religious beliefs and activities; how he understood those in power and how he evaluated their use of power in society — not least in relation to Christians; about women and how they should behave, dress, etc. Thus his writings contain a lot of information about, and evaluation of, the others. The aim of this article is to describe and discuss Tertullian's images of these others.

Using Tertullian's writings as a source for such descriptions and evaluations demands careful considerations about his relations to these others whom he describes and criticizes and the nature and aim of his writings in which these descriptions are found. Tertullian's images of the others cannot be taken at face value. He always has a specific agenda. What he describes is seen from his own position; what he writes is written with certain aims in mind; those he accepts are accepted on

¹ For biographical details about Tertullian, see T. D. Barnes, *Tertullian: A Historical and Literary Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971). Barnes (pp. 1–2) believes that Tertullian lived from 155 until as late as 230–40. For a more traditional dating from 160 to shortly after 220, see for example Hubertus R. Drobner, *Lehrbuch der Patrologie* (Freiburg: Herder, 1994), pp. 124–25. Barnes's book is an inspiring challenge to the traditional descriptions of Tertullian's biography, which most often take Jerome's portrait of Tertullian in his *De viris illustribus* ad notam. Thus Barnes argues against the traditional view that Tertullian was a jurist (pp. 22–29) and that his father had a high rank in the Roman army (pp. 13–21).

certain conditions laid down by himself;² and those he rejects are rejected because they do not fulfil the conditions set by him. This is, of course, more or less always the case, but it is especially true in the case of Tertullian, because most of his writings are of a polemical and apologetic nature and very often of a subtle nature which makes the reader forget about Tertullian's own agenda.³

In this situation the theories of 'otherness' or 'othering' which are used and developed among others by the editor of this book, Maijastina Kahlos (cf. her Introduction) are very helpful. The basic notion in such theories is that depictions of others are mainly a tool in constructing one's own identity. The images of 'the others' do not reveal much about the others but quite a lot about those who construct the images of others. The others are a negative mirror of oneself. What we and our group are not is described as characteristic of the others. This is certainly true in the case of Tertullian. However, we should not forget that images of others are only convincing if there is a grain of truth in them. This means that even if the purpose of the construction of the others is construction of oneself, the constructions very often reveal elements of truths about the others. This is also the case in Tertullian's descriptions of the others. Analysing Tertullian's depictions of the others we should thus look for elements of self-construction as well as elements which help us to understand the others.

Tertullian's Image of Pagans

Pagans were a very important other for Tertullian. He lived and wrote at a time when Christianity was a minority religion under pressure from the surrounding pagan society. In his *Apologeticum* Tertullian deals with the Roman authorities' treatment of Christians, and in his *De spectaculis* and *De idololatria* he is occupied with the question of what the Christians' attitude to their pagan surroundings should be. In these texts, the depictions of the pagans also contribute heavily to Tertullian's construction of Christian identity.

² Tertullian certainly often points to the 'rule of faith' as the norm for his ideas and opinions; cf. *Adversus Praxeum*, 2–3.

³ Cf. Robert Dick Sider, *Ancient Rhetoric and the Art of Tertullian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), for a detailed analysis and discussion of Tertullian's use of classical rhetorical strategies.

*Apologeticum*⁴

Apologeticum is formally addressed to 'magistrates of the Roman Empire' (*Romani imperii antistites*).⁵ These magistrates are responsible for the legal (or — according to Tertullian — illegal) treatment of the Christians in the empire. It seems as if Tertullian with his treatise hopes to change the Roman authorities' attitude towards the Christians. In Tertullian's opinion, Christians are not treated in a proper way which suits the Roman legal system.⁶ At the same time as he criticizes the treatment of the Christians, he defends Christians and Christianity against different accusations which were raised against Christians by the authorities and other non-Christians (cf. below). In doing this, Tertullian also paints a picture of his pagan opponents.

In the introduction to *Apologeticum* (1–3) Tertullian claims that Christians are persecuted because of a name (Christ) and not because of some punishable actions. The authorities judge Christians on the basis of rumours and not on the basis of facts. For instance, Christians are judged because of unattested rumours about Christians' ritual killing of children and committing incest (cf. also *Apologeticum*, 7–9). According to Tertullian, this shows that his opponents are ignorant about what Christians are and what Christianity really is. These others love ignorance

⁴ In Eric Osborn, *Tertullian, First Theologian of the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 65–87, there is a chapter on Tertullian as apologist with specific focus on Tertullian's *Apologeticum*. Osborne argues that Tertullian's apologetics is governed by two principles which are both of Stoic origin. The first principle is 'the strife of opposites' which basically means that in conflicts justice and reason must balance injustice and unreason. Thus Tertullian tried to balance the injustice and unreason which were brought forth by the Roman authorities against Christians. The second principle is the principle of 'recognizing the well-known God'. According to Osborn, Tertullian's idea is that the one true God can be recognized by all because of the abilities of human nature — the human soul which is Christian by nature.

⁵ Here and elsewhere, the Latin text and the English translation of *Apologeticum* is taken from Tertullian, *Apology / De spectaculis*, edn with trans. by T. R. Glover, Loeb Classical Library, 250 (London: Heinemann, 1966). In scholarship it is discussed whether the emperor was the intended addressee of the *Apologeticum*. In my opinion it is possible that Tertullian hoped that his treatise would reach the authorities, maybe even the emperor, but he probably also had other addressees in mind, for example other Christians who could learn from the treatise how to argue for their right to exist. The small treatise addressed to Scapula is another example of how Tertullian addressed Roman authorities. Among other things, in this treatise Tertullian defends the Christians' attitude towards the emperor. They honour him not as a god, but as a man chosen by God to be next to God.

⁶ In scholarship it is discussed whether Tertullian was educated in law; cf. Barnes, *Tertullian*, pp. 22–29.

(*ignorantia*) and hate truth (*veritas*) (*Apologeticum*, 1). Moreover the authorities do not want to know the truth about Christianity and Christians. Therefore they do not investigate their case as they normally do with criminals (*Apologeticum*, 2. 1–5). In addition to that, actions taken against the Christians are inconsistent. According to the regulations of Trajan,⁷ the Christians should not be tracked down, but when they were brought to the judges anyway they should be sentenced and punished — even without further investigation. This is according to Tertullian inconsistent: if Christians are guilty of any crime, they should be hunted down; if not, they should not be tracked down, and should not be punished if they were nevertheless brought to court.⁸ The first element of Tertullian's picture of non-Christians, especially the non-Christian Roman authorities, is thus that they are ignorant and hate truth and that the Roman legal system, as it was administered at the time of Tertullian, treats Christians unjustly and inconsistently. This image of non-Christians and non-Christian Roman authorities is not coherent with the self-understanding of these non-Christian Romans. They would think of themselves as lovers of truth and justice. This is exactly the point which Tertullian tries to make: he will show that his adversaries do not act according to their own self-perception. Tertullian's point is to show that he and Christians in general agree with non-Christians that truth and justice are positive concepts. The difference between Christians and non-Christians is that Christians act according to the concepts of truth and justice while the pagan authorities do not.

In *Apologeticum*, 7–9 where Tertullian deals with the accusations against Christians for being incestuous and for committing ritual murders of children in their secret rituals he adds more elements to his picture of the non-Christians.⁹ First he

⁷ Concerning Emperor Trajan's regulations of the legal attitudes towards Christians, cf. his correspondence with Pliny. Plinius Minor, *Epistulae*, 10. 96–97, in Pliny, *Letters and Panegyricus*, edn with trans. by Betty Radice, Loeb Classical Library, 2 (London: Heinemann, 1969). Jakob Engberg, *Impulsore Chresto: Opposition to Christianity in the Roman Empire c. 50–250 AD* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2007), pp. 173–206, carefully evaluates the scholarly discussions of what can be learnt about the relations between the Roman authorities and the Christians from the letters of Pliny and Trajan. See further the standard commentary to the letters of Pliny: A. N. Sherwin-White, *The Letters of Pliny: A Historical and Social Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966).

⁸ *Apologeticum*, 2, cf. also 4. 4–6. 2 where Tertullian criticizes the present Roman authorities' attitudes towards the legal tradition: they reject the positive sides of the legal tradition and keep the bad.

⁹ Cf. Philip A. Harland, "These People are ... Men Eaters": Banquets of the Anti-Associations and Perceptions of Minority Cultural Groups', in *Identity and Interaction in the Ancient Mediterranean: Jews, Christians and Others. Essays in Honour of Stephen G. Wilson*, ed. by Zeba A. Crook and Philip A. Harland (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2007), pp. 56–76.

claims that these accusations are based on rumours (*Apologeticum*, 7). Rumours are according to the traditional Roman understanding mendacious. As before, Tertullian depicts Romans as preferring lies to truths — if it fits their purpose. Tertullian again appeals to the common love of truth. Taking the discussion a step further he asks why his adversaries think that Christians could commit such awful crimes as killing and eating small children and committing incest if the Romans do not think themselves able to? Christians are humans as they are — of the same nature.¹⁰ Again Tertullian appeals to a common ground between Christians and non-Christians, namely their common humanity. Thus Tertullian recognizes the humanity of his adversaries, but at the same time he claims humanity for himself and his fellow Christians. In the last part of this passage (*Apologeticum*, 9), however, Tertullian moves in another direction. He suddenly claims that his adversaries do themselves what they accuse Christians of doing: in Africa children are sacrificed to Saturn, and in Gaul old people are sacrificed to Mercury. According to Tertullian, it is common among Romans to expose or drown newborn children or to kill them even before they are born. Romans also run the risk of being incestuous because of their promiscuous sexuality: they will probably have sexual relations with their own offspring without realizing the genetic relations. According to Tertullian, these misbehaviours are the reason why the Romans think that Christians act likewise. Here, it seems as if Tertullian abolishes his own appeal to a common humanity. He defends Christians by claiming that their adversaries do things worse than what they accuse the Christians of. We can thus identify two different — possibly opposite — apologetic strategies in the same passage.¹¹

According to Tertullian, the most important critique which is directed against the Christians is that they do not worship the gods:

‘You do not’, say you ‘worship the gods; you do not offer sacrifice for the Emperors.’ It follows by parity of reasoning that we do not sacrifice for others because we do not for ourselves — it follows from our not worshipping the gods. So we are accused of sacrilege and treason at once. That is the chief of the case against us — the whole of it, in fact; and it in any case deserves investigation, unless the judgement is to be given by prejudice or injustice, the one despairing of the truth, the other refusing it. Your gods, then, we cease to worship, from the moment when we recognize that they are not gods. So that is what you ought to

¹⁰ *Apologeticum*, 8: ‘Qui ista credis de homine, potes et facere. Homo es et ipse, quod et Christianus. Qui non potes facere, non debes credere. Homo est enim et Christianus et quod et tu.’

¹¹ Concerning the apologetic strategies used by Tertullian, see Anders-Christian Jacobsen, ‘Main Topics in Early Christian Apologetics’, in *Critique and Apologetics: Jews, Christians and Pagans in Antiquity*, ed. by Anders-Christian Jacobsen, Jörg Ulrich, and David Brakke, Early Christianity in the Context of Antiquity, 4 (Frankfurt: Lang, 2009), pp. 85–110 (p. 102).

require us to prove — that those gods are not gods and are therefore not to be worshipped; because it is only if they had been gods that they should be worshipped. Then indeed Christians would deserve punishment if it were established that the gods whom they did not worship because they thought they were not gods, really were gods.¹²

Tertullian thus responds to this charge by claiming that the gods of the Romans are not gods at all, but men who after their death were called gods by their fellow men.¹³ Having realized this, Christians abstain from worshipping these so-called gods. In this way Tertullian launches a very serious attack on the Roman cult. It is again a matter of truth and falsehood: Tertullian and his fellow Christians stick to the truth while his adversaries are stuck in falsehood. Tertullian continues and supports his attack on the Roman cult and gods by a characteristic piece of irony: in *Apologeticum*, 12–16, he very ironically describes how the pagan images of the gods were made by craftsmen using all kinds of tools. These craftsmen hurt the gods very badly with their tools, but the gods did not complain about this violence. This is, of course, because the craftsmen in reality worked on a piece of dead wood or stone. Had the images been living gods they would not have put up with this treatment. Likewise gods are sold on the marketplace or melted down in order to use the metal for pots. And the poets depict the gods as humans with all the problems of humans, and in the theatres and arenas the so-called gods are involved in all kinds of blasphemous activities. All these are according to Tertullian clear signs of the Romans' depraved relations with the divine. In contrast to this, Christians are worshippers of the truth:

Well, what do they worship, who don't worship such things? Here you have it; it lies within easy reach of your understanding, that, since they are not worshippers of falsehood, they are worshippers of Truth; that they no longer continue in an error which they have recognized and so have abandoned. Get a hold of this point first, and then learn the whole

¹² *Apologeticum*, 10. 1–2: 'Deos, inquit, non colitis, et pro imperatoribus sacrificia non penditis. Sequitur ut eadem ratione pro aliis non sacrificemus, quia nec pro nobis ipsis, semel deos non colendo. Itaque sacrilegii et maiestatis rei convenimur. Summa haec causa, immo tota est, et utique digna cognosci, si non praesumptio aut iniquitas iudicet, altera quae desperat, altera quae recusat veritatem. Deos vestros colere desinimus, ex quo illos non esse cognoscimus. Hoc igitur exigere debetis, uti probemus non esse illos deos, et idcirco non colendos, quia tunc demum coli debuissent, si dei fuissent. Tunc et Christiani puniendi, si quos non colerent, quia putarent non esse, constaret illos deos esse.'

¹³ Cf. *Apologeticum*, 12. 1. According to M. S. Burrows, 'Christianity in the Roman Forum: Tertullian and the Apologetic Use of History', *Vigiliae Christianae*, 42 (1988), 209–35 (pp. 219–21), this is an example of how Tertullian uses historical arguments in his apologetic endeavour, thus destroying the ideas of his adversaries. In this case Tertullian points out that the Roman gods were considered to be ordinary humans by early Roman historians.

system of our religion — but there are some false opinions about it that must first be cleared out of the way.¹⁴

In a long passage (*Apologeticum*, 28–45) Tertullian discusses what he calls the second charge against the Christians — namely the charge of not worshipping the emperor (28. 3).¹⁵ The basic apologetic argument in this part of the *Apologeticum* is that non-Christian worshippers of the emperor are providing an empty and even dangerous service to the emperor because worshipping a human being as a god is in the best case a useless and ineffective act and in the worst case a dangerous act because it can draw the wrath of the one true God. The Christians, on the other hand, serve the emperor in the right way because they pray to the one true God for the welfare of the emperor, the empire, and all its citizens. According to Tertullian, the non-Christian worshippers of the emperor are thus wrong again. He expresses this wrongness in different ways. First of all he says that they act contrary to reason (*ratio*) (28. 3). For Tertullian, this seems to be a fundamental description of the non-Christians — they live and act contrary to reason and truth; they are irreligious.

But it is you who are the really religious¹⁶ people — you who seek Caesar's safety where it is not, who pray for it from those by whom it cannot be given, who pass by Him in whose power it is. Yes, and more than that, you wage war on those who know how to pray for it, and who can obtain it too, since they know how to pray for it.¹⁷

This irreligious life contrary to reason and truth can be seen from the way in which non-Christians worship and honour the emperor. On the festive days they convert the streets of the cities into public houses and pubs and their own homes into brothels. They thus celebrate the emperor with excesses and unrestrained activities (35. 1–7). Likewise the non-Christians show their so-called faithfulness towards the emperor by conspiracies against him. Tertullian lists many examples of such conspiracies. Before conspiring against the emperor, these people had worshipped him. These non-Christians are thus hypocritical in their worship of the emperor

¹⁴ *Apologeticum*, 15. 8: 'Quid ergo colunt qui talia non colunt? Iam quidem intellegi subiacet veritatis esse cultores qui mendacii non sint, nec errare amplius in eo in quo errasse se recognoscendo cessaverunt. Hoc prius capite et omnem hinc sacramenti nostri ordinem haurite, repercussis ante tamen opinionibus falsis.'

¹⁵ The first charge discussed by Tertullian was the charge of not worshipping the gods.

¹⁶ Some manuscripts and editions read *irreligiosi*. According to Glover, whose edition of Tertullian I follow, the right reading is *religiosi*, because this is an example of Tertullian's use of irony.

¹⁷ *Apologeticum*, 29. 5: 'Sed vos religiosi, qui eam quaeritis ubi non est, petitis a quibus dari non potest, praeterito eo in cuius est potestate. Insuper eos debellatis qui eam sciunt petere, qui etiam possunt impetrare, dum sciunt petere.'

(35. 8–13). According to Tertullian, against this background, the Christians' prayers to the only true God for the welfare of the emperor must be considered as the most positive and faithful way to support the emperor. It is obvious that such a description of the non-Christians' worship is extremely biased, but it provides a nice background for his praise of the Christians' loyalty towards the emperor.

In the last part of his *Apologeticum* (46–50) Tertullian compares the Christians with the philosophers. The reason is that Tertullian wonders why Christians are persecuted while philosophers are not. The philosophers claim many of the same things as the Christians about the best ways of human life, about the divine, and about the emperors. However, they are never forced to worship the gods or the emperor, and they are never persecuted (46. 1–4). According to Tertullian, when comparing Christians and philosophers, the Christians are revealed to be superior. That is true when it comes to knowledge, but also when it comes to conduct in daily life:

But then what have a philosopher and a Christian in common, — the disciple of Greece and the disciple of heaven, — the business of the one with reputation, of the other with salvation, — the man of words and the man of deeds, — the builder and the destroyer, — the friend and the foe of error, the man who corrupts the truth, and the man who restores it and proclaims it — the thief of truth and its guardian?¹⁸

What the philosophers know about truth — the truth of God, the world, human nature, etc. — they have taken from the holy scriptures of the Jews and Christians.¹⁹ This means that pagans are inferior to Christians.

The image of the others which Tertullian paints in his *Apologeticum* is thus an image of a depraved society shying away from truth and clinging to falsehood. It is a society which does not observe its own laws and the good intentions of its own legal system. It is a society which creates its own gods and therefore neglects the relation to the only true God. It is a society which worships political leaders as gods and which therefore rejects the worship and the worshippers of the true God, who is the only power which can secure the lasting welfare of the empire. It is obvious

¹⁸ *Apologeticum*, 46. 18: 'Adeo quid simile philosophus et Christianus? Graeciae discipulus et caeli? famae negotiator et vitae? verborum et factorum operator, et rerum aedificator et destructor? amicus et inimicus erroris? veritatis interpolator et integrator et expressor, et furator eius et custos?'; see further 46. 8–18.

¹⁹ *Apologeticum*, 47. Cf. also Osborn, *Tertullian*, pp. 29–31, and H. B. Timothy, *The Early Christian Apologists and Greek Philosophy* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1973), pp. 40–58, who — like many others — points to an ambivalence in Tertullian's relation to philosophy: on the one hand he rejects philosophy as a way to truth; on the other hand he draws on it heavily, especially Stoic arguments and ways of argumentation.

that this pejorative description of the Roman society is Tertullian's construction which he creates as the background which will set off the lawfulness and piety of the Christians. The question is whether there is any truth in Tertullian's description of the Roman society and in the description of the Christians at this background. There are probably elements of truth in Tertullian's descriptions of how Christians are persecuted against the Roman law itself and how pagans worship emperors. However, it is Tertullian's intention, not to give a fair description of the Roman society of his time, but to promote Christians as the most responsible citizens of the empire. Establishing a negative image of the pagans is thus for Tertullian a way to establish a positive self-description of Christians.

*De spectaculis*²⁰

De spectaculis is addressed to 'servants of God' (*dei servi*) who are about to draw near to God (*qui cum maxime ad deum acceditis*). Tertullian is thus addressing Christians who are not yet firm believers and who have not yet a full understanding of Christian doctrine and discipline. According to Tertullian, these Christians are easily led astray. His aim is to warn and teach them in this case about the dangers of public shows (*spectaculum*). According to Tertullian, these shows are basically of the same nature, but with two different intentions: 'For from the very beginning games were classed under two heads, sacred and funeral, — in other words games in honour of heathen gods and of dead men.'²¹ Indeed, the spectacles can be divided into horse races (9), plays in the theatre (10), combat in the arena where prisoners sentenced to death are brought for the wild beasts, combat where gladiators are fighting beasts or killing prisoners or animals (11), and finally services for the dead called *munus* or *officium* (12).

According to Tertullian, ancient sources from the heathens themselves tell that the shows came to Rome with immigrants from Asia. From this origin the shows spread and were devoted to different gods and to dead people (5–6). Tertullian

²⁰ Concerning the structure and content of *De spectaculis*, cf. P. G. van der Nat, 'Tertullianae', *Vigiliae Christianae*, 18 (1964), 129–43. Van der Nat points out that Tertullian's arguments against Christians visiting the spectacles rest on the status and content of Christian Faith: rational truth and moral prescripts (p. 134).

²¹ *De spectaculis*, 6: 'Nam et a primordio bifariam ludi censebantur, sacri et funebres id est deis nationum et mortuis.' Here and elsewhere, the Latin text and the English translation is quoted from Tertullian, *Apology / De spectaculis*, edn with trans. by Glover.

thus uses a rhetorical commonplace, explaining the shows as something exotic imported from the east and therefore basically un-Roman as well as un-Christian.²²

These shows are, according to Tertullian, not consistent with true religion and true obedience to the true God. The basic assumption of Tertullian is that the shows are intimately connected with idolatry (4. 13). Those who take part in the shows are therefore guilty of idolatry:

Enough, I think, has been said to complete our plan of procedure, in proving in what ways, and in how many ways, the spectacles involve idolatry [...]. So on that account, since both kinds of idol stand on the same footing (dead men and gods are one and the same thing), we abstain from both kinds of idolatry. Temples or tombs, we abominate both equally; we know neither sort of altar; we adore neither sort of image, we pay no sacrifice, we pay no funeral rite. No, and we do not eat of what is offered in sacrificial or funeral rite, because 'we cannot eat of the Lord's supper and the supper of demons' (1 Corinthians 10. 21).²³

According to Tertullian, all Christians must reject the shows and not take part in them because they are expressions of idolatry — idolatry which Christians have forsaken at their baptism where everything belonging to the devil and the demons was rejected (4). Christians should avoid places where shows take place, because such places are occupied by evil spirits:

For what sort of conduct is it to go from the assembly of God to the assembly of the devil? From sky to sty, as the proverb has it? Those hands you have uplifted to God, to tire them out clapping an actor? With those lips, with which you have uttered *Amen* over the Holy Thing, to cheer for a gladiator? To say *for ever and ever* to any other whatever but to God and Christ?²⁴

However, circuses, shows, and idolatry are part of the fallen world. Because Christians are in the world they cannot always avoid being in places where these things

²² In *De spectaculis*, 8 Tertullian claims that the worship of the sun which often takes place in the circus comes from Egypt. This is another example of the claimed foreign and exotic origin of the shows.

²³ *De spectaculis*, 13: 'Satis, opinor, implevimus ordinem, quot et quibus modis spectacula idololatriam committant, [...]. Propterea igitur, quoniam utraque species idolorum condicionis unius est, dum mortui et dei unum sunt, utraque idololatria abstinemus. Nec minus templa quam monumenta despuimus, neutram aram novimus, neutram effigiem adoramus, non sacrificamus, non parentamus. Sed neque de sacrificio et parentato edimus, quia non possumus cenam dei edere et cenam daemoniorum.'

²⁴ *De spectaculis*, 25: 'Quale est enim de ecclesia dei in diaboli ecclesiam tendere, de caelo, quod aiunt, in caenum? Illas manus quas ad deum extuleris postmodum laudando histrionem fatigare? Ex ore, quo Amen in Sanctum protuleris, gladiatori testimonium reddere, *eis aionas ap' aionos* alii omnino dicere nisi deo et Christo?'

take place. Even the streets are full of idols and images of gods. If Christians are in such places, they must avoid taking part in the idolatry which takes place there. Otherwise they run the risk being contaminated: 'We are defiled by the defiled' (*de contaminatis contaminamur*), Tertullian says (8). Idolatry is infectious! This is an important idea because it means that Christians should avoid contact with idolatry and those who commit it in order not to be polluted or infected. Avoiding contact means cutting off relations. Tertullian exhorts his fellow Christians to avoid taking part in idolatry, in this case idolatry connected with games and shows, but at the same time he says that Christians cannot avoid being at places where shows and idolatry take place. Tertullian is thus trying to balance Christians' relations to the 'world'. Christians are in 'the world' among the others. This cannot be avoided, but they must avoid taking part in what the others do. This is a recurring theme in Tertullian.

According to Tertullian, Christians ask why they are not allowed to take part in the shows. They ask for direct statements from the Bible which prohibit their partaking in shows (cf. 2). It is obviously hard for Tertullian to come up with biblical statements which directly forbid partaking in these shows. But Tertullian claims that what takes place in connection with the shows is forbidden by the Bible: it is forbidden to commit murder, which happens in the arena when prisoners or gladiators are killed; it is forbidden to take part in sexual amoralities, which are conducted in the arena as well as in the theatres; it is also forbidden to destroy or change the image of God, which happens when people are killed or mauled or when actors wear masks in order to change their identity (cf. 19–23). Christians should be aware of these things because they have been taught the truth and confessed it at their baptism. Heathens who have no access to the revealed truth are confused in these matters. This is the reason why they hold something as good in one place but as evil in another: most heathens claim that murder is evil and repulsive — except when it takes place in the arena; most of them hold nakedness and sexual abuse unacceptable — except when it takes place in the arena or the theatre (cf. 21–22). According to Tertullian, Christians have no excuse for taking part in these things. They know or should know that it is contrary to God's will and therefore forbidden. Heathens do not have the same access to truth, but they should know that what happens in the theatres and the arenas is contrary to the laws and the morals which they follow outside these places.

In *De spectaculis* Tertullian is addressing Christians who have recently been converted. In contrast to what was the case in *Apologeticum* he is thus talking to his own — not to the other. The treatise gives us, however, a good impression of what — according to Tertullian — is characteristic of the others: their love of, and

attraction to, different kinds of shows. In these shows, Tertullian finds a combination of worship of non-existing gods and immorality — according to him the two most precise characteristics of the non-Christians in the Roman Empire including North Africa. The basic problem for Tertullian, however, is not that pagans go to the theatre and watch shows in the arena. The problem is that many Christians do the same. The baptismal teaching and the baptism itself do not lead to as clear a shift of identity as it should have. Christians are still part of the world. The very negative description of the pagan praxis is Tertullian's way of sharpening the identity of the recently baptized Christians. His aim is to make them aware of the ideological differences which he finds between Christians and their non-Christian surroundings and to transform these ideological differences into praxis.

De idololatria

In his treatise on idolatry (*De idololatria*) Tertullian defines idolatry as 'all attendance and service about every idol'.²⁵ *Idololatria* comes — according to Tertullian — from the Greek *eidos* and *eidolon* which basically means *form* or something *formed*. Idolatry is thus to worship something formed. Contrary to this is the true worship of the one true God who has no form. Tertullian does not state this definition of true worship in this passage, but the definition is familiar to Tertullian and it is an implicit consequence of what he says in *De idololatria*, 3.²⁶ The others are thus in this case those who worship that which is formed instead of the one who formed it (cf. Romans 1. 21–25). Most people define idolatry in a narrow way meaning conducting of sacrifices, giving banquets in relation with sacrifices, being members of priestly colleges, etc. Idolatry can and must, however, also be understood in a wider sense as when Jesus defines adultery as including looking at another's wife with lust, Matthew 5. 28 (2). Understood in this wider sense idolatry is murder, murder of one's own self; idolatry is adultery and fornication, because the idolater conducts fornication with other gods; idolatry is deceit, because

²⁵ Tertullian, *De idololatria*, 3: 'Inde idololatria omnis circa omne idolum famulatus et servitus.' The Latin text of *De idololatria* is quoted from F. Oehler, *Quinti Septimii Florentis Tertulliani: Quae supersunt omnia*, I (Leipzig, 1853). The English translation is from *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, III: *Tertullian*, ed. by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, rev. by A. Cleveland Coxe (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1957).

²⁶ See for a more detailed discussion of Tertullian's definition of idol and idolatry J. C. M. Van Winden, 'Idolum and Idolatria in Tertullian', *Vigiliae Christianae*, 36 (1982), 108–14. According to Van Winden the terms *idolum* and *idolatria* designate that worship is given to demons and not to the one true God (cf. e.g. p. 112).

the idolater is deceitful against the only true God when he gives honour to other gods, etc. Tertullian concludes: 'Thus it comes to pass, that in idolatry all [crimes]²⁷ are detected, and in all crimes idolatry.'²⁸ The idolaters are thus not only worshipping images of gods whom they have invented themselves. No, they conduct their lives in a totally wrong way based as it is on empty and vain assumptions. Christians run the risk of failing the goal of their lives if they do not understand idolatry in this wider sense. Only when Christians recognize the true nature of idolatry can they avoid it. Tertullian thus complains that idolatry has already led Christians astray (2). *De idololatria* is thus written to warn Christians about the dangers of idolatry. Whether Tertullian also thinks that by this unveiling of idolatry he can convert idolaters to Christianity is uncertain.

As we have already seen, it is important for Tertullian to make clear to his Christian readers that idolatry is sneaking in everywhere. Many aspects of daily duties are — according to Tertullian — connected with idolatry in one way or another. It is thus not only the worshippers of idols who are idolaters. Those who produce idols are the same — even if they themselves consider their work to be a normal piece of handicraft (4). Christians can work as craftsmen. Craftsmen do work for men as well as for gods (idols), because men and gods often are in need of the same services: they both need houses, cloths, etc. Christian craftsmen should use their skills in the service of men, not of gods (8). Christians should also totally avoid other professions, such as astrology (9); teaching, because it includes — or better consists of — reading pagan literature about pagan gods (10); certain kinds of trades which provide things necessary for idolatry (11); and the training of gladiators (11).

Christians who make their living from these kinds of jobs are not Christians at all. Therefore they should not be allowed into the church. No excuses can be accepted. Christians have condemned idolatry — that is the same as the devil — at their baptism. Therefore no kind of idolatry should be allowed for Christians after their baptism (5–7). In this part of *De idololatria* Tertullian builds very clear boundaries between 'us and them', between Christians and pagans. No blurring of these lines can be accepted by Tertullian. There is, however, one exception: Christians can be educated in pagan schools even if the literature studied there is pagan. Tertullian claims that Christian pupils in the pagan schools can avoid being affected by pagan literature. However, the real reason for allowing Christians to go to pagan schools was probably of a more practical nature: this was the only way to

²⁷ The word is inserted because of the crimes mentioned in *De idololatria*, 1.

²⁸ *De idololatria*, 1: 'Ita fit, ut omnia in idololatria et in omnibus idololatria deprehendantur.'

be educated. Education thus seems to be so important for Tertullian that he in this case allows a blurring of the lines between Christians and pagans (10).

The next theme which Tertullian addresses is the relations of the Christians to their fellow citizens who are not Christian. First Tertullian declares that Christians should not take part in celebrations, holidays, etc. which have a religious content (13). Again, the lines between pagans and Christians seem to be drawn very sharply. However, Christians and pagans have some basic relations which — according to Tertullian — are not broken by the religious differences. Christians and pagans are all humans. They have to live together in the world:

But albeit he does not prohibit us from having our conversation with idolaters and adulterers, and the other criminals, saying, *otherwise ye would go out from the world* (1 Corinthians 5. 10), of course he does not so slacken those reins of conversation that, since it is necessary for us both to live and to mingle with sinners, we may be able to sin with them too. Where there is the intercourse of life, which the apostle concedes, there is sinning, which no one permits. To live with heathens is lawful, to die with them is not. Let us live with all; let us be glad with them, out of community of nature, not of superstition. We are peers in soul, not in discipline, fellow-possessors of the world, not of error.²⁹

In the same way, Christians shall obey the emperor as long as this does not include idolatry. This means that Christians should pay their taxes and follow the laws as long as it is not demanded that they worship the emperor as a god or worship other gods as happens among pagans when they decorate their houses on festival days. This custom seems to have spread also among Christians (15).

If Christians are invited to private celebrations such as namegivings, weddings, etc. they can take part if they do not include idolatry which could be the case if the host asks his Christian guest to assist with a sacrifice connected to the celebration:

But since the evil one has so surrounded the world with idolatry, it will be lawful for us to be present at some ceremonies which see us doing service to a man, not to an idol. Clearly, if invited unto priestly function and sacrifice, I will not go, for that is service peculiar to an idol; but neither will I furnish advice, or expense, or any other good office in a matter of that kind. If it is on account of the sacrifice that I be invited, and stand by, I shall be

²⁹ *De idololatria*, 14: ‘Sed etsi non prohibet nos conversari cum idololatriis et adulteris et ceteris criminosis, dicens, “Ceterum de mundo exiretis” (1 Corinthians 5. 10), non utique eas habenas conversationis immittit, ut, quoniam necesse est convivere nos et commisceri cum peccatoribus, idem et compeccare possimus. Ubi est commercium vitae, quod apostolus concedit, ibi peccare, quod nemo permittit. Licet convivere cum ethnicis, commori non licet. Convivamus cum omnibus; conlaetemur ex communione naturae non superstitionis. Pares anima sumus, non disciplina, compossessores mundi, non erroris.’

partaker of idolatry; if any other cause conjoins me to the sacrificer, I shall be merely a spectator of the sacrifice.³⁰

Christians can thus — according to Tertullian — be friends with non-Christians without problems, and likewise take part in celebrations together with them or in the neighbourhood, etc., as long as this does not include taking part in idolatry. It seems that Tertullian accepts that Christians can be present at occasions where idolatry (e.g. sacrifices) takes place as long as they themselves do not take part in it. The borders are somewhat blurred.

The same rules apply to Christians holding public positions: they can do it as long as it does not include idolatry. Tertullian, however, seems to think that it is very difficult to hold such positions without being involved in idolatry. Christian slaves and children in non-Christian households have the same problems, but in these cases the situation can be worse, because slaves and children cannot just leave. According to Tertullian, they must, however, refuse to take part in idolatry following the examples of Joseph in Egypt and Daniel in Babylon. The consequences of this would probably be tough.³¹

Tertullian thus does not demand that Christians leave the world and break all bonds which tie them to non-Christian fellow citizens, but he does demand that Christians only involve themselves with non-Christians as long as they can do that without being involved in idolatry.

According to Tertullian, Christians in the late second and early third century CE did live in a world dominated by pagans. These pagans are a threat to Christians, but they are also neighbours and friends. The pagans are a threat to Christians when they directly persecute Christians, but also — and probably more so — when their way of life and worship attract Christians who, as newly converted, are in the borderland between their old pagan and their new Christian identities. Tertullian therefore aims at drawing sharp lines between pagans and Christians. However, he admits that Christians live in this world and therefore cannot avoid some relations to the 'world'.

³⁰ *De idololatria*, 16: 'Sed quoniam ita malus circum dedit saeculum idololatria, licebit adesse in quibusdam, quae nos homini, non idolo, officiosos habent. Plane ad sacerdotium et sacrificium vocatus non ibo (proprium enim idoli officium est), sed neque consilio neque sumptu aliave opera in eiusmodi fungar. Si propter sacrificium vocatus adistam, ero particeps idololatriae: si me alia causa coniungit sacrificanti, ero tantum spectator sacrificii.'

³¹ *De idololatria*, 17. Cf. also *De corona*, 11 where Tertullian says that Christians should refuse public offices in general because it is impossible to hold such offices without committing sins. In *De corona* Tertullian specifically deals with military service which necessarily leads to sinning, because soldiers are obliged to obey other lords than the one true God.

Heretics as the Others

Tertullian wrote several texts against heretics. One of them, *De praescriptione haereticorum*, is a general and principal description of heresy and heretics. In addition to that, Tertullian wrote several texts against concrete heresies and heretics such as Marcion, Praxeas, Hermogenes, and the Valentinians.³² Tertullian's concern and zeal for what in his eyes is orthodox Christianity is obvious. His opposition to — and aversion against — types of Christianity which in his eyes are heresy is the same. The intensity of his opposition to heresy shows that he finds the threat from heretics even more dangerous for orthodox Christianity than the threats from paganism and from the pagan authorities. Heretics can corrupt Christianity from inside and seem therefore — according to Tertullian — to be a more serious threat against Christianity. With this background, it could seem to be self-contradictory that Tertullian ended up as a heretic Montanist himself — if he did so! This is, however, an erroneous way of seeing things. From his own point of view, Tertullian was of course never a heretic. It is by definition always the others who are heretics! It is likewise in his antiheretical writings that Tertullian has the best possibilities of developing his own theological position, because the divergences between himself and those whom he considers to be heretics are about the interpretation of Christianity. In the following I will give some examples of his polemics against other Christians.

De praescriptione haereticorum

In his general prescriptions against heretics, Tertullian brings forward some definitions which are interesting in this connection where our focus is on heretics as others. Tertullian claims that orthodoxy is what is handed down through the tradition, in the Scriptures, etc. (20–22). Orthodoxy is what the apostles have

³² Cf. Tertullian, *De praescriptione haereticorum* / *Vom prinzipiellen Einspruch gegen die Häretiker*, ed. and trans. by Dietrich Schleyer, *Fontes Christiani*, 42 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), pp. 10–15. According to Schleyer the heretics against whom Tertullian argues in his antiheretical writings are Gnostics. In the group of Gnostics he also includes Marcion. This is unusual in modern scholarship on Gnosticism and Marcionitism. In this case it can be justified because Tertullian in *De praescriptione haereticorum*, 30 and 37 mentions Valentinus, Marcion, and Apelles and their adherents as the three groups of heretics which he has in mind in *De praescriptione haereticorum*. Schleyer's definition of the characteristics of Gnostics (pp. 14–15) is not up to date either. The reason might be that he builds his description of Gnosticism on quite old literature, cf. p. 15 n. 12. This is unfortunately also the case in the following rather comprehensive paragraphs where Schleyer presents Valentinianism (pp. 15–40), Marcionitism (pp. 40–58), and the teaching of Apelles (pp. 59–64).

taught openly (25–26) and faithfully (27–28).³³ Heresy is, on the other hand, private ideas and new constructions, which are deviations from truth which always comes first (29–39). ‘We’ — the orthodox Christianity to which Tertullian claims to belong — are thus in direct contact with the beginning of Christianity, the true Christianity, etc., while the heretics have no contact with this beginning and therefore no contact with true Christianity. They have themselves invented their own ‘Christianity’ — probably inspired by the philosophers.³⁴ Orthodox Christians *believe* according to the ‘rule of faith’ (14) which is in accordance with the content of the Scriptures (19). Therefore they do not seek any other truth. The heretics for their part are always seeking other truths, and according to Tertullian this indicates that they have not found any truth at all and that they do not know where and how to find the one and only truth (9–14). Having invented their own new and false ‘Christianity’ they turn out to be idolaters worshipping their own gods, not the one true God. Thus heretics suddenly are classified as idolaters together with pagans who also create their own gods (40). The difference is that heretics pretend that they are Christians — and thus threaten and attack orthodox Christianity from within — while pagans attack Christianity more openly and directly from without. Therefore it is more urgent for Tertullian to create differences and boundaries between his own position and the heretics’.

Heretics (‘they’) are thus different from orthodox Christians (‘we’) — in a bad way: orthodox Christians stick to tradition, heretics invent new ideas; orthodox Christians believe the truth, heretics have not found the truth and therefore invent falsehood; orthodox Christians believe in the one true God, heretics worship their own inventions as gods; etc. Once again we see that Tertullian’s depictions of his adversaries are stereotypical because this enables him to draw a sharp line between his party and his adversaries. This general depiction of heretics is made more concrete in Tertullian’s writings against concrete heresies and heretics such as Marcion and Praxeas.

Adversus Marcionem

Adversus Marcionem is a huge work where Tertullian presents long arguments against Marcion and his followers. The all-important topic in *Adversus Marcionem*

³³ Concerning ‘apostolicity’ as a criterion for the truth of Christianity, see Tertullian, *De praescriptione haereticorum*, ed. and trans. by Schleyer, pp. 100–04.

³⁴ Cf. *De praescriptione haereticorum*, 7. Concerning Tertullian’s view on philosophy in this text and in general, see Tertullian, *De praescriptione haereticorum*, ed. and trans. by Schleyer, pp. 65–86.

is the concept of God.³⁵ I will therefore give a few examples from Tertullian's arguments against Marcion's idea about the existence of two gods. At the same time I will focus on the rhetorical and polemical strategies Tertullian employs against Marcion. This should help us to see how Tertullian depicts heretics — in this case Marcion and the Marcionites — as the others.³⁶

As mentioned, the central theological theme in Tertullian's criticism of Marcion is the concept of God. Are there two gods? An affirmation of this principle is what Tertullian would have us believe that Marcion's propositions mean. Or is there only one God? Obviously, Tertullian believes that only the latter question can be answered affirmatively.³⁷ Tertullian claims that Marcion distinguishes between a good and kind God on the one hand, and a righteous and severe God on the other. Marcion aims to avoid oppositions *in* God while Tertullian claims that there are such oppositions in God — however in perfect proportion.³⁸ According to Marcion, the righteous and even evil God is the creator while the good God is the father of Jesus Christ (1. 2). Marcion's distribution of goodness and righteousness, kindness and severity on two gods is his way of solving the problem of the sources of evil: according to Marcion, good and evil cannot come from the same source, the same God.³⁹ According to Tertullian, all this is Marcion's own invention.

³⁵ The extensive discussions about the separation of the Old and the New Testament and about the content of the Gospels and the Pauline corpus, which are the main topics in *Adversus Marcionem*, books 4 and 5, basically goes back to the discussions about the concept of God. The question is which parts of the New Testament represent the good and loving God, the father of Jesus Christ. Cf. E. P. Meijering, *Tertullian Contra Marcion: Gotteslehre in der Polemik. Adversus Marcionem I–II* (Leiden: Brill, 1977), pp. 10–11.

³⁶ In this section, I am not concerned with the historical and theological accuracy of Tertullian's claims — for which the reader is referred to Adolf von Harnack, *Marcion: Das Evangelium vom Fremden Gott*, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur Reihe 3 Bd. 15 (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1921; repr. 1924) and *Marcion und seine kirchengeschichtliche Wirkung: Vorträge der Internationalen Fachkonferenz zu Marcion, gehalten vom 15.–18. August 2001 in Mainz*, ed. by Gerhard May, Katharina Greschat, and Martin Meiser (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002) — but rather the polemics as presented by Tertullian.

³⁷ Cf. Osborn, *Tertullian*, pp. 11–16, for a general discussion of this problem.

³⁸ *Adversus Marcionem*, 2. 29. Cf. also Osborn, *Tertullian*, pp. 88–91, who confirms that this is the central question in Tertullian's critique of Marcion's theology. According to Osborn, Marcion follows the philosophical (Platonic) mainstream which claims the complete unity in God.

³⁹ Tertullian says (1. 2): 'For like many even in our day, heretics in particular, Marcion had an unhealthy interest in the problem of evil — the origin of it — and his perceptions were numbed by the very excess of his curiosity' ('Languens enim (quod et nunc multi, et maxime haeretici), circa

Marcion has invented a new God who is only good (2. 1, 2. 11). Such new inventions cannot be trusted — the older is the better. This was a well-known and strong argument in antiquity. Age, history, tradition, duration were positive values in antiquity. This argument has often been employed against Christians, and Tertullian often had to defend Christianity against this argument.⁴⁰ In this situation he himself uses the argument against Marcion.⁴¹

According to Tertullian there is only one God who is the creator and redeemer of the world:

But Christian verity has decisively asserted that if God is not one only, he does not exist: [...] In so far as human limitation can make any definition concerning God, I give that definition which all men's common sense will accept, that God is the supremely great, firmly established in eternity, unbegotten, uncreated, without beginning and without end.⁴²

In 1. 3 he continues the discussion using an argument built on logic: if God by definition is supremely great, nothing can equal him, because if he had an equal he would not be supremely great. Therefore the supremely great God must by definition be singular.⁴³

This one God is righteous and therefore the source of good as well as of evil, of creation as well as of destruction, of salvation as well as of perdition. In 2. 11 Tertullian argues for this point of view saying that God from the beginning was solely

mali quaestionem, unde malum, et obtunsis sensibus ipsa enormitate curiositatis') (Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem*, ed. and trans. by Ernest Evans (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972)).

⁴⁰ Cf. *Adversus Hermogenem*, 1. 1; *De carne Christi*, 2. 6; *Apologeticum*, 47. 10; *Adversus Praxean*, 2. 2, 20. 3; *Adversus Marcionem*, 4. 5. 7, 5. 9. 1. Tertullian's answer shows that he accepts the argument of age.

⁴¹ Cf. 1. 1, 1. 8–9, 1. 19, 1. 22. See further Meijering, *Tertullian*, pp. 8–10; Peter Pilhofer, *Presbyteron Kreiton: Der Altersbeweis der Jüdischen und christlichen Apologeten und seine Vorgeschichte* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1990), pp. 274–80.

⁴² *Adversus Marcionem*, 1. 3: 'Sed veritas Christiana destrictae pronuntiavit, Deus si non unus est, non est, [...]. Quantum humana conditione de deo definire potest, id definitio quod et omnium conscientia agnoscet, deum summum esse magnum, in aeternitate constitutum, innatum, infectum, sine initio, sine fine.'

⁴³ *Adversus Marcionem*, 1. 3: 'Cum de isto conveniat apud omnes [...], quae erit iam condicio ipsius summi magni? Nempe ut nihil illi adaequetur, id est ut non sit aliud summum magnum, quia, si fuerit, adaequabitur, et si adaequabitur non erit iam summum magnum, eversa condicione et, ut ita dixerim, lege quae summon mango nihil sinit adaequari. Ergo unicum sit necesse est quod fuerit summum magnum, par non habendo, ne non sit summum magnum. Ergo non aliter erit quam per quod habet esse, id est unicum omnino. Proinde deus cum summum magnum sit, recte veritas nostra pronuntiavit.'

good, but because of the sins of humans he had to employ other attitudes towards humans as well:

Thus the goodness of God came first, as his nature is: his sternness came afterwards, as there was reason for it. The former was ingenerate, was God's own, was freely exercised: the latter was accidental, adapted to need, an expedient. For as it was not right that nature should hold its goodness in restraint and inoperative, neither was it seemly that reason should dissemble and escape its sternness. The former was God's duty paid to himself, the latter his duty to circumstances.⁴⁴

In 1. 24–25 Tertullian criticizes Marcion for claiming a god who is only good and nothing else. The first part of Tertullian's criticism focuses on the nature of the goodness which the Marcionites claim for their good god. According to Tertullian, his goodness cannot be total because he is not able to save all in the end, he only saves the soul, not the body, and now in the present time the Marcionites still suffer from diseases. These are all signs of the imperfect goodness of Marcion's good god. In opposition to this, Tertullian claims that there is only one God who is not only good, but also severe, just, etc.

As concerns this question of his goodness, on this front we have reached the conclusion that goodness <of this kind> is by no means adequate for a god, as it is neither ingenerate nor rational nor perfect, but is even dishonest and unjust, and unworthy even of the name of goodness: because, in fact, in so far as <goodness> is an attribute of deity it is not seemly that one should be a god, whose claims rest on that sort of goodness, and not merely that sort, but no other besides. So our next subject of discussion rightly is whether a god is to be accounted such by virtue of goodness alone, to the exclusion of those other adjuncts, those feelings and affections, which the Marcionites deny to their god and attach to the Creator, but which we recognize in the Creator as no dishonour to God.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ *Adversus Marcionem*, 2. 11: 'Ita prior bonitas dei secundum naturam, severitas posterior secundum causam. Illa ingenita, haec accedens; illa propria, haec accommodata; illa edita, haec adhibita. Nec natura enim inoperatam debuit continuisse bonitatem, nec causa dissimulatam evasisse severitatem. Alteram sibi, alteram rei deus praestitit'; cf. Osborn, *Tertullian*, pp. 100–01.

⁴⁵ *Adversus Marcionem*, 1. 25: 'Quod attinet ad bonitas quaestionem, his lineis deduximus eam minime deo adaequari, ut neque ingentem neque rationalem neque perfectum, sed et improbum et iniustum et ipso iam bonitatis nomine indignum, quod scilicet in quantum deo congruat, in tantum deum non esse conveniat qui de tali bonitate etiam praeferatur, nec de tali modo, verum et sola. Iam enim et hoc discuti par est, an deus de sola bonitate censendus sit, negatis ceteris appendicibus, sensibus et affectibus, quos Marcionitae quidem a deo suo abigunt in creatorem, nos vero et agnoscimus in creatore ut deo dignos.'

Tertullian thus prefers to maintain monotheism and ascribes several different attributes to this one god.⁴⁶

In addition to this more theological discussion about the concept of God, Tertullian also put forward quite a lot of slighting and harsh statements about the god of the Marcionites and about Marcion and the Marcionites themselves. I will give some examples.

Tertullian claims that Marcion's newly invented god is powerless (1. 11). This powerless god is perverse (*perversus*), irrational (*irrationalis*), and empty, unreliable, and stupid (*vanus*) as well (1. 28). Further, the god of Marcion breaks into the world which is not his own and steals the created beings from the creator. Marcion's god is thus a thief (1. 23).

In addition to these harsh assertions about Marcion's god, Tertullian has even worse things to say about Marcion himself and his followers. As the first example I will mention how Tertullian uses Marcion's origin from Sinope in the region of Pontus on the southern coast of the Black Sea in a pejorative way. In fact Tertullian opens his work against Marcion with a description of Pontus and the inhabitants of that region. Pontus is located far from civilization; it is a barbaric place where strange tribes live. People there have no houses or permanent dwelling places, but they live in wagons; their sexual life is promiscuous and conducted openly in the wagons. The women are half naked and conduct the house work with battle axes. Also the land itself is unpleasant: the sun never shines; instead there is always fog and winter. The wind always blows from the north, and the rivers are always frozen. And finally people there eat their forefathers (1. 1). But worse than all this is that Marcion was born there:

Even so, the most barbarous and melancholy thing about Pontus is that Marcion was born there, more uncouth than a Scythian, more unsettled than a Wagon-dweller, more uncivilized than a Massagete, with more effrontery than an Amazon, darker than fog, colder than winter, more brittle than ice, more treacherous than the Danube, more precipitous than Caucasus. Evidently so, when by him the true Prometheus, God Almighty, is torn to bits with blasphemies. More ill-conducted also is Marcion than the wild beasts of that barbarous land: for is any beaver more self-castrating than this man who has abolished marriage? What Pontic mouse is more corrosive than the man who has gnawed away the Gospel?⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Cf. Meijering, *Tertullian*, pp. 13–19, concerning the discussion on the concept of God in *Adversus Marcionem*, 1. 3.

⁴⁷ *Adversus Marcionem*, 1. 1: 'Sed nihil tam barbarum ac triste apud Pontum quam quod illic Marcion natus est, Scythia tetrior, Hamaxobio instabilior, Massageta inhumanior, Amazona audacior, nubilo obscurior, hieme frigidior, gelu fragilior, Istro fallacior, Caucaso abruptior. Quidni? penes quem verus Prometheus deus omnipotens blasphemiis lancinatur. Iam et bestiis illius

What we see here is a very pejorative rhetoric connecting Marcion with a specific location which is characterized by some quite barbaric traditions. These traditions go far back and are found, for example, in Herodotus (*Historiae*, 1. 215–16) who wrote about the costumes of the Massagetes — a tribe living by the Black Sea or further east. In ancient sources they were often confused with Scythians, Huns, or others. Tertullian opens his treatise against Marcion with this piece of derogatory rhetoric with the object of stigmatizing Marcion as a barbarian who is in every way untrustworthy, from the very beginning. This image is maintained throughout the whole treatise by repeated short negative references to Pontus.⁴⁸ These references remind the readers of the more extensive passage on Marcion's origin in Pontus which opened the treatise. This is a fine example of the advanced rhetoric which Tertullian is able to use in his depiction of the others.⁴⁹

In *Adversus Marcionem* Tertullian uses his rhetorical skills in a very aggressive, pejorative, but also elegant way. At the same time he goes rather deep into the disputed theological substance. Altogether, this shows that Tertullian considered the conflict with Marcion and the Marcionites to be very important — probably more important than the conflicts with pagans and the pagan authorities. As so often, internal conflict and enemies are considered more dangerous than external. According to Tertullian, Christian heretics are the most dangerous foes of the Christian communities because they are not as easily identified as others as pagans are. In order to be able to segregate Christian heretics as the others, Tertullian had to use a harsher and more pejorative rhetoric which could create a clearer image of the heretics as the others, who are different from 'true' and 'orthodox' Christians.

barbariei importunior Marcion. Quis enim tam castrator carnis castor quam qui nuptias abstulit? Quis tam comesor mus Ponticus quam qui evangelia corrosit?

⁴⁸ Cf. *Adversus Marcionem*, 1. 1, 1. 7, 1. 11, 1. 19, 2. 1, 2. 5, 3. 6, 3. 11, 3. 13, 4. 1–2, 4. 7, 4. 10, 5. 1, 5. 14. Concerning Tertullian's references to Pontus and their rhetorical function, see Meijering, *Tertullian*, pp. 7–8, and Charlotte Radler, 'The Dirty Physician: Necessary Dishonor and Fleshly Solidarity in Tertullian's Writings', *Vigiliae Christianae*, 63 (2009), 345–68 (pp. 354–55).

⁴⁹ *Adversus Marcionem* provides us with other examples of how Tertullian uses his rhetorical skills to flatten and wipe out his adversaries: Tertullian says that Marcion and the Marcionites are irrational, fools, and thoughtless (1. 5, 1. 7, 2. 16, 2. 29); the Marcionites are like cuttlefish which pour out darkness (2. 20); Marcion puts himself above his master (the one God) (1. 14), and his sins are worse than Adam's (2. 2). The list could be continued almost endlessly.

Adversus Praxean

In his treatise against Praxeas, Tertullian maintains a more moderate tone, when compared to his treatise against Marcion. The reason for this cannot be that, from a theological point of view, the theme under discussion is less important. While the discussion with Marcion was about the unity or duality of God, in *Adversus Praxean* it is about the unity and trinity of God.⁵⁰ From a theological point of view, the two themes are of equal importance. The reason for the more moderate tone must therefore be something else. I think the reason is that Tertullian did not find that Praxeas and his position was so great and acute a threat to what Tertullian believed to be orthodox Christianity as was Marcion and his position.⁵¹ According to Tertullian (*Adversus Praxean*, 1) Praxeas had a conflict with the Bishop of Rome because he criticized the bishop's acceptance of the Phrygian prophets Montanus, Prisca, and Maximilla who were the main figures in the Montanist movement. This seems to have had the consequence that Praxeas was expelled from the Church in Rome. The bishop's support of the Montanists was withdrawn and Praxeas returned to the community 'of the carnal minded' in Rome, as Tertullian puts it (*Adversus Praxean*, 1). After that, says Tertullian, nothing has been heard of him. Personally Praxeas thus does not seem to have left many traces, and is therefore personally no threat. The question is whether he managed to establish a powerful theological position. Tertullian says that Praxeas returned to his old (which probably means what Tertullian would call true or orthodox) faith (*Adversus Praxean*, 1). Praxeas thus did not establish an alternative group, community, or church as did Marcion. What Tertullian realized was that Praxeas's concept of God had spread to simple-minded Christians for whom it was difficult to understand how the one God could be Father, Son, and Holy Ghost without disturbing the unity:

⁵⁰ See Osborn, *Tertullian*, pp. 116–43, concerning the Christology and trinitarian theology in *Adversus Praxean*.

⁵¹ It seems clear from the first paragraph of the treatise that Tertullian has left the 'established' Church, which he calls the 'carnal minded', to follow the Paraclete, that is, the Montanists. Tertullian's 'Montanism' has been much discussed in the literature. Some claim that he broke with the so-called 'Catholic Church' and was affiliated with the Montanist movement and thus became a schismatic. Others claim that he only sympathized with the ideal of the Montanists. See Barnes, *Tertullian*, pp. 130–42 (esp. pp. 141–42) who agrees that *Adversus Praxean* shows that Tertullian became an adherent of the Montanist movement even if he made very important contributions to the development of orthodox doctrine at the same time. David Rankin, *Tertullian and the Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 41–51, claims that Tertullian was never an adherent of Montanism, but had sympathies with what he calls 'the New Prophecy movement'. Rankin gives a very useful summary of the debate.

Praxeas tares were sown above <the wheat> and had germinated here also, while many were asleep in simplicity of doctrine. Thereafter they were brought to light, by whom God would, and seemed even to have been rooted up. In fact the teacher gave security for amendment by return to his former opinions, and his bond remains in the custody of the natural men, in whose presence the transaction was then carried out.⁵²

The ‘tares’ of Praxeas’s heresy seemed to be destroyed, but the seed of heresy had been sown and after a while it flourished again:

But those tares had at that time scattered their seed everywhere, and so for a time it lay hid, deceptively dissembling its life, and has now burst forth anew. But it shall also be plucked up anew, if the Lord will, in the time now at my disposal: if not, then in its due time all counterfeit grain will be gathered and, along with other offences, be burnt up in unquenchable fire.⁵³

This second growth of the heresy seems to be the occasion for Tertullian’s treatise against Praxeas. Tertullian is as always sure that his evaluation of the others is in accordance with the will of God. Should he himself not succeed in overthrowing the adherents of Praxeas, God will prevail on the Day of Judgement when the tares will be separated from the wheat and incinerated. The destiny of the others is clear.

In *Adversus Praxeas*, 3 Tertullian explains why these simple-minded Christians have difficulties understanding Tertullian’s trinitarian concept of God, and why this is a problem:

For all the simple people, that I say not the thoughtless and ignorant (who are always the majority of the faithful), since the Rule of Faith itself brings <us> over from the many gods of the world to the one and only true God, not understanding that while they must believe in one only <God> yet they must believe in him along with his economy, shy at the economy. They claim that the plurality and ordinance of trinity is a division of unity — although a unity which derives from itself a trinity is not destroyed but administered by it. And so <people> put it about that by us two or even three <gods> are preached, while

⁵² *Adversus Praxeas*, 1: ‘Fruticaverant avenae Praxeanae hic quoque superseminatae, dormientibus multis in simplicitate doctrinae: tractatae dehinc per quem duces voluit, etiam evulsae videbantur. Denique caverat pristinum doctor de emendatione sua, et manet chirographum apud psychicus apud quos tunc gesta res est.’ The Latin text as well as the English translation of *Adversus Praxeas* is here and elsewhere quoted from Ernest Evans, *Adversus Praxeas liber, Tertullian’s Treatise against Praxeas* (London: SPCK, 1948).

⁵³ *Adversus Praxeas*, 1: ‘Avenae vero illae ubique tunc semen excusserant: ita aliquamdiu per hypocrisin subdola vivacitate latitavit et nunc denuo erupit. Sed et denuo eradicabitur, si voluerit dominus, in isto commeatu: si quo minus, die suo colligentur omnes adulterae fruges et cum ceteris scandalis igni inextinguibili cremabuntur.’

they, they claim, are worshippers of one God — as though unity irrationally summed up did not make heresy and trinity rationally counted out constitute truth.⁵⁴

It is thus clear that it is the not very distant past of the simple-minded believers that makes it difficult for them to understand the trinitarian concept of God. It is only recently, at their baptism, that they have learned that according to Christian faith there is only one God. They therefore protested when Tertullian tried to convince them that this one God was actually threefold.⁵⁵ Praxeas and his followers focused on the unity in the concept of God. In this way he tried to secure the monotheism which Christianity had inherited from Judaism, and which also was a common trend in the second century, for example, in philosophical circles.⁵⁶ It was therefore difficult for Praxeas to accept that God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost were all divine and individual persons. This was a well-known problem already in the second and third centuries even if it became more acute in the fourth century. One solution to this problem was to deny the divinity of Jesus and the Spirit, as Arius did later on. Another solution was the one Praxeas adopted, saying that there is only one divine person who takes different shapes in the divine economy. This solution forced Praxeas to claim the following: 'He says that the Father himself came down into the virgin, himself was born of her, himself suffered, in short himself is Jesus Christ.'⁵⁷ This solution was not accepted by Tertullian who

⁵⁴ *Adversus Praxean*, 3: 'Simplices enim quique, ne dixerim imprudentes et idiotae, quae maior semper credentium pars est, quoniam et ipsa regula fidei a pluribus diis saeculi ad unicum et verum deum transfert, non intelligentes unicum quidem sed cum sua oeconomia esse credendum, expavescent ad oeconomiam. numerum et dispositionem trinitatis divisionem praesumunt unitatis, quando unitas ex semetipsa derivans trinitatem non destruat ab illa sed administretur. itaque duos et tres iam iactitant a nobis praedicari, se vero unius dei cultores praesumunt, quasi non et unitas irrationaliter collecta haeresim faciat et trinitas rationaliter expensa veritatem constituat.'

⁵⁵ The treatise cannot be addressed to Praxeas himself as he had disappeared, according to Tertullian. It is also a bit problematic to assume that the treatise was addressed to the simple-minded Christians who according to Tertullian followed Praxeas's ideas. They were probably unable to follow Tertullian's long and complicated arguments. Thus the treatise must have been addressed to bishops and others who took care of the simple-minded Christians.

⁵⁶ Concerning these tendencies towards monotheism in pagan philosophy and religion, see *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Polymnia Athanassiadi and Michael Frede (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁵⁷ *Adversus Praxean*, 1: 'ipsum dicit patrem descendisse in virginem, ipsum ex ea natum, ipsum passum, denique ipsum esse Iesum Christum'.

used the opportunity to develop his own trinitarian theology which was to be very influential, labelled as it was as 'orthodoxy'.⁵⁸

As usual, Tertullian employs different pejorative arguments and expressions against Praxeas. Some of them are well known to us by now. This is for instance true of the argument of age: Tertullian claims that Praxeas's point of view is a new idea (*Adversus Praxean*, 2). We also find arguments which are created to be used in this specific situation. As I mentioned above, according to Tertullian, Praxeas was involved in a conflict in Rome. Tertullian exploited this situation saying, 'Thus Praxeas at Rome managed two pieces of the devil's business: he drove out prophecy and introduced heresy: he put to flight the Paraclete and crucified the Father.'⁵⁹ Praxeas was, according to Tertullian, the devil's helpmate and the killer of God the Father. The crimes cannot be much worse. In *Adversus Praxean*, 9, it emerges that Tertullian's own trinitarian concept was interpreted as implying diversity in the godhead — and Tertullian dismisses those who claim this as being uneducated and perverse. This is a very simple kind of argument, almost like what can be heard among children: 'If you do not agree with me, you are stupid.' In *Adversus Praxean*, 11 Tertullian accuses Praxeas of making God a liar when he claims that the Father and the Son are one and the same. Tertullian's argument is that God in the Scripture often speaks to his son. If Father and Son are one, God would speak to himself and thus be a liar when he claims to speak to another person. This argument builds on the idea generally accepted at the time of Tertullian that God speaks in the Bible. This example shows again how Tertullian constructs a very negative image of his adversaries.

These examples show that Tertullian also in this treatise uses rather harsh arguments, but as mentioned above he is less aggressive in his treatise against Praxeas than in his treatise against Marcion. The main reason seems to be — as I already mentioned — that he took the threat from Praxeas to be less serious than that of Marcion. However, another thing could also have caused him to be more cautious in his criticism of Praxeas: There are hints in the texts which show that Tertullian himself was under attack for his way of explaining the relationship between God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost. In *Adversus Praxean*, 4 Tertullian writes:

⁵⁸ It is not my aim here to describe and discuss Tertullian's trinitarian theology which he develops in his answers to Praxeas. A brief introduction to this can be found in most introductions to early Christian doctrine (*Dogmengeschichte*), for example Wolf-Dieter Hauschild, *Lehrbuch der Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte*, 1: *Alte Kirche und Mittelalter* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1995), pp. 13–16.

⁵⁹ *Adversus Praxean*, 1: 'ita duo negotia diaboli Praxeas Romae procuravit, prophetiam expulit et haeresim intulit, paracletum fugavit et patrem crucifixit'.

Yet how can I, who derive the Son from no alien <source>, but from the Father's substance, <who say> he does nothing without the Father's will and that he has received from the Father all authority — how can I in the matter of the faith be destroying that monarchy which I say has been delivered by the Father to the Son and is conserved in the Son? Let this be taken to apply also to the third sequence, for I reckon the Spirit from nowhere else than from the Father through the Son. Beware therefore lest you rather are destroying the monarchy, who are overthrowing that ordinance and dispensation of it which consists in as many names as God would.⁶⁰

In order to understand this, we must remember that in Tertullian's day, what later became orthodox trinitarian theology was not established at all. Actually Tertullian was one of the first to develop this specific solution to the problem which later became orthodox. In his own time, Tertullian's suggestion was one of many, and he had to fight to establish it. He could not beforehand be sure of any kind of general support, even though he was convinced that he knew about the true nature of God.

The reading of *Adversus Praxeian* shows us Tertullian as an engaged champion for what he considers to be true and orthodox Christianity. In order to reach clear definitions of orthodoxy he constructs a very negative image of his adversaries as heretic others. However, Tertullian's criticism of the others is more reluctant in this case than it was in his treatise against Marcion. This is a matter of the acuteness of the threat — the more acute the threat, the more need there is for creating distance which can be done by discursive othering.

Women as the Others

*De cultu feminarum*⁶¹

Tertullian opens his treatise on women's dress by a description of how he understands women, their situation, and their role (1). He understands women and their

⁶⁰ *Adversus Praxeian*, 4: 'Ceterum qui filium non aliunde deduco, sed de substantia patris, nihil facientem sine patris voluntate, omnem a patre consecutum potestatem, quomodo possum de fide destruere monarchiam quam a patre filio traditam in filio servo? hoc mihi et in tertium gradum dictum sit, quia spiritum non aliunde puto quam a patre per filium. vide ergo ne tu potius monarchiam destruas, qui dispositionem et dispensationem eius evertis in tot nominibus constitutam in quot deus voluit.'

⁶¹ Marie Turcan (*Tertullien, La Toilettte des Femmes: introduction, texte critique, traduction et commentaire*, ed. by Turcan, Sources Chrétiennes, 173 (Paris: Cerf, 1971), pp. 29–30) dates *De cultu feminarum* to 202. In her introduction Turcan also discusses other questions related to the treatise, for example the history and the style of the text.

position on the basis of the story of the Fall of humankind in Genesis 3. According to Tertullian, Eve — the woman — was the cause of the Fall. She committed the first sin and was therefore responsible for the entering of sin and destruction into the world. The appearance of women should reflect this. Therefore women should wear cloth which signals their mourning and repentance. Tertullian explains women's situation in this way:

And do you not know that you are an Eve? The sentence of God on this sex of yours lives in this age: the guilt must of necessity live too. You are the devil's gateway: you are the unsealer of that tree; you are the first deserter of the divine law: you are she who persuaded him whom the devil was not valiant enough to attack; you destroyed so easily God's image, man. On account of your desert — that is, death — even the Son of God had to die. And do you think about adorning yourself over and above your tunics of skins?⁶²

Instead of reflecting the responsibility for this fallen condition, women dress up in all kinds of fancy clothes and jewellery (1. 1).

In *De cultu feminarum*, 2. 2 Tertullian exhorts Christian women to be very modest in their appearance in order not to awaken the lust of those (men) who look at them. Christian women should not awaken the lust of their neighbours. They should therefore abstain from all attempts to add to their natural female beauty by dressing or using makeup.⁶³ Christian women should even cover their natural beauty even if this is an expression of God's capacity as creator. If Christian women do not avoid arousing the lust of their neighbours they will cause their spiritual death:

For that other, as soon as he has felt concupiscence after your beauty, and has mentally already committed (the deed) which his concupiscence pointed to, perishes; and you have made the sword which destroys him: [...] Are we to paint ourselves out that our neighbours may perish?⁶⁴

⁶² *De cultu feminarum*, 1. 1: 'et Euam te esse nescis? Viuit sententia Dei super sexum istum in hoc saeculo: uiuat et reatus necesse est. Tu es diaboli ianua; to es arboris illius resignatrix, tu es diuinae legis prima desertrix; tu es quae eum suasisti, quem diabolus aggredi non valuit; tu imaginem Dei, hominem, tam facile elisisti; propter tuum meritum, id est mortem, etiam filius Dei mori habuit: et adornari tibi in mente est super pelliceas tuas tunicas?' The Latin text is from *Tertullian*, ed. by Turcan. The English translation is a slightly revised form of the text in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, IV: *Tertullian*, ed. by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, rev. by A. Cleveland Cox (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965).

⁶³ In *De cultu feminarum*, 2. 5–2. 7 Tertullian specifies what Christian women are allowed and what they should avoid concerning dress, use of make-up, etc.

⁶⁴ *De cultu feminarum*, 2. 2: 'Perit enim ille simul ut tuam formam concupierit et admisit iam animo quod concupiit, et facta es tu gladius illi [...]. Expingamus nos ut alteri pereant!'

It is very easy to see that Tertullian here depicts women as the dangerous, perhaps even demonic, other who drags men into sin. Tertullian comes very close to saying that women are responsible for men's sexual lust and therefore also for their sexual sins. The curse of Eve is still on women (cf. also 2. 3–2. 4, 2. 9).

De praescriptione haereticorum

In *De praescriptione haereticorum*, 41 Tertullian comments on the failing discipline of the heretics. Their catechumens consider themselves to be perfect, their ordinations are not conducted correctly, and their women misbehave: 'The very women of these heretics, how wanton they are! For they are bold enough to teach, to dispute, to enact exorcisms, to undertake cures — it may be even to baptize.'⁶⁵ According to Tertullian, some or all of the heretics with whom he deals in this treatise (Marcionites, Valentinians, and the followers of Apelles) allow women to undertake duties which among Tertullian and his followers (the orthodox) were the prerogatives of men. According to Tertullian, this is a consequence of a lack of authority and discipline. Compared to men, women are the others who should not intervene in religious duties. This view of women was probably rather widespread in the second and third centuries CE, but at the same time it is well known that women often played an important role in religious rites in non-Christian religious contexts. Tertullian's resistance against women taking care of religious duties is probably also due to his understanding of women as the entrance of sin and evil into the world — not least into men (cf. above).

Apologeticum

In *Apologeticum*, 6. 4 Tertullian also comments on women's status. In this case he does not focus on Christian women, but — as the context in *Apologeticum* demands — on non-Christian women or Roman women in general. He first praises the behaviour and conduct of women in old days — the older is the better. At that time women did not wear any gold jewellery except the wedding ring. Now — at the time of Tertullian — women are unable to bend their fingers because they are overloaded with jewellery. In earlier times, women never drank wine. They were

⁶⁵ *De praescriptione haereticorum*, 41. 5 (CSEL, 70): 'Ipsae mulieres haereticas, quam procaces! Quae audeant docere, contendere, exorcismos agere, curationes repromittere, fortasse an et tingere.'

even killed by their husbands or relatives if they were caught drinking wine. This is — according to Tertullian, unfortunately — not the case any more.

It seems as if Tertullian is equally critical towards Christian and non-Christian women. Even if he focuses on different subjects, everything is about morals — bad morals. Women are different and dangerous others. They do not control themselves either, because they are in collusion with the devil or because they get drunk — which might be the same. They are therefore dangerous to men who can be led astray by them.⁶⁶ This seems to be an unnecessarily complicated way to address the real problem — men's failing capacity to handle their sexual lust. Tertullian's instructions to women reflect the prevailing image of women in Roman society in general. This image was, however, stressed among Christians who used the Jewish-Christian stories about the woman's role as entrance for sin into the originally perfect world. Men — not least Christian men — excuse their own moral weaknesses by blaming women.

Concluding Remarks

Tertullian lived and wrote in a period of history when Christianity was gradually being cast into the orthodox form it only later fully assumed. This situation made it urgent for Tertullian and his contemporaries to develop and strengthen Christian identity. A well-known tool in identity construction is to construct one's own identity by constructing the other. 'They' are like this and that. 'We' are *not* the same! Constructing the other is thus an important element in the construction of one's self or one's own group. In this way, Tertullian tried to clear up blurred boundaries and mixed identities. The way in which Tertullian exhorts Christians to live according to well-defined moral and religious standards, and the way in which he criticizes non-Christians for their way of life, shows that it is not very easy to straighten out and clear up blurred boundaries and mixed identities. As Tertullian admits, Christians live in the world where things are blurred. If Christianity was to survive, Tertullian felt it necessary to create boundaries between 'them' and 'us' in order to make it possible for Christians to live in the world, but not according to the world.

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⁶⁶ Barnes, *Tertullian*, pp. 132–41, presents Tertullian's attitude to women as a sign of his moral strictness which also leads him to appreciate the Montanist movement.

FROM *SUPERSTITIO* TO *RELIGIO CHRISTIANA*:
CHRISTIANS AS OTHERS
FROM THE THIRD TO THE FIFTH CENTURY

Markus Mertaniemi

Introduction: Historical Background for the Image-Formation Process

In this article, I will examine how non-Christian writers depicted Christians from the third century to the fifth century. My analysis is divided into two main parts: the first part examines the mental image that existed of Christians when they held a minority position in the beginning of the period; the second part scrutinizes the image of Christians when they were in the majority or the more powerful position. I will focus on what is said about Christians as ‘others’, outsiders or alien to ‘us’. I will therefore not discuss how Christian identity was formed and strengthened but rather how non-Christians depicted Christians.

Peter Brown states, ‘a hair’s breadth separated pagan and Christian members of the intelligentsia’. The average good Romans and Christians were both ‘pious, religious, quiet, and chaste’.¹ Averil Cameron writes along the same lines, ‘Christian ideas and practices are seen as corresponding in many ways with those of the rest of society, rather than being in conflict with them’.² When reading Brown and Cameron, we may wonder why ancient writers in spite of their shared values and customs divided society into two parts: Christian and Hellene. This strict dichotomy was used by both sides to argue for coercive measures and discrimination

¹ Peter Brown, ‘Approaches to the Religious Crisis of the Third Century A.D.’, *English Historical Review*, 83 (1968), 542–58 (p. 555).

² Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of Christian Discourse* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 31.

against the other group. In Late Antiquity, Christians were persecuted and church buildings ruined; pagans were killed and temples destroyed. One reason for this was that contemporaries construed an enemy. Keeping in mind the historical fact that there was a real similarity between these two groups, this article will try to answer the question of how and why Christians were established in people's minds as others.

Christianity was a minority religion in the third century, but in the fourth century it first gained status as an officially accepted religion, and later it attained the majority position among the religions and was favoured by Christian emperors. According to Rodney Stark's estimates made by comparing the statistical data from better-known historical periods, the number of Christians could have grown from 1000 (0.0017 per cent of the population) in the year 40 to 33,882,008 (56.5 per cent of population) in 350. According to this estimate, during the persecutions in the second half of the third century, the number of Christians might have been from 1.9 per cent to 10.5 per cent of the total population.³ This growth was a remarkable change in the social status of Christians as well as their contemporaries: Christians had become the majority by 350. Other Graeco-Roman religions were driven to the same situation in which Christianity had been before the fourth century, that is, in the minority (assuming the numbers presented above to be realistic/accurate).

Conflicts between the adherents of Graeco-Roman religion and the Christians began on a large scale in the third century, simultaneously with the difficulties facing the empire and the socio-economical crisis. The so-called soldier-emperors rose to power from among the army leaders and practised coercive religious policies. Decius was the first Roman emperor who demanded a sacrificial ritual act from every resident of the Roman Empire. According to the imperial decree, everyone had to make a sacrifice. Otherwise, they risked being punished even by death. Only six years after that, Emperor Valerian persecuted those who worshipped the Christian God. His policy was targeted more directly against Christians. The last emperor who opposed Christians by a statewide coercive policy was Diocletian and some of his co-emperors and followers during the years 303–12. Adding up all the years when Christians were persecuted during these three first Christian centuries,

³ Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 3–27. This estimate is based on the population of the Roman Empire being sixty million and the Christian growth being a steady 40 per cent per decade. This is the average growth when a new religious movement gains new adherents and its basis is in social networks through which people become acquainted with new ideas and communities.

it comes to fifteen years in total. Moreover, there were local conflicts and violence against Christians and some other emperors put into effect limited coercive acts.⁴ Still, there is some basis for maintaining that forbearance was a more common attitude than persecution.⁵ This actual 'toleration' makes the question of the persecutions, coercive policy, and discrimination even more interesting because there was no forcing factor that would have driven different religious or ideological groups into continuous conflict.

A remarkable change took place when Constantine and his co-emperor Licinius decided on an official toleration policy and Licinius issued the so-called decree of Milan in 313. As an officially accepted religion, Christianity became, little by little, the majority religion of the empire. There were only occasional setbacks such as Emperor Julian's short reign (360–63) during which limited action against Christianity was taken for the last time.

Only three decades after Julian's reign, non-Christian religions came under the same kind of restrictive and coercive policy that had earlier been targeted against Christians. However, the early legislation concerning non-Christian religions could not name them as 'pagan', as opposite to Christianity, but it banned non-Christians rituals one after the other. This was due to the fact that in the early phases of Christian legislation there was no single blanket term for the non-Christian religions. The coercive policy was implemented by Emperor Theodosius I and his successors.⁶

⁴ Some basic studies on conflict between 'pagans' and Christians include W. H. C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church: A Study of a Conflict from the Maccabees to Donatus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1981); Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (Harmondsworth: Viking, 1986); Jacques Moreau, *La Persécution du christianisme dans l'Empire Romain* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1956); Joachim Molthagen, *Der römische Staat und die Christen im zweiten und dritten Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970). Especially influential since the 1960s is the study by G. E. M. de Ste Croix, 'Why Were the Early Christians Persecuted?', *Past and Present*, 26 (1963), 6–38; repr. in G. E. M. de Ste Croix, *Christian Persecution, Martyrdom, and Orthodoxy*, ed. by Michael Whitby and Joseph Streeter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 105–52. De Ste Croix emphasized religion as the main reason for the conflict between pagans and Christians.

⁵ See, e.g., Annemarie Luijendijk, 'Papyri from the Great Persecution: Roman and Christian Perspectives', *JECS*, 16 (2008), 341–69.

⁶ Majastina Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue: Christian and Pagan Cultures, c. 360–430* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), p. 16.

The Image of Christians before 313: The Enemy

The source material is only fragmentary,⁷ and scattered throughout the third century and beginning of the fourth century. Nevertheless, it seems that the number of Christians and the number of depictions of Christians are interconnected. The same seems to apply to the depictions of Jews. Earlier in the first and second centuries, Jews were depicted more often than Christians were, but during the third century Christians were depicted more frequently than Jews. Moreover, there were texts that were specifically targeted against Christianity.

The date of the Neoplatonist Porphyry's polemical work *Against the Christians* is still under dispute among scholars; it can be dated either to the 270s or just before or at the beginning of the Great Persecution (303 CE).⁸ In any case, Porphyry's work influenced attitudes towards Christianity and is a remarkable source for the image of Christianity. Porphyry's text *Philosophy from Oracles* also contained direct polemic against Christianity. It consisted of quotations from the oracles with Porphyry's own comments. Furthermore, there was Sossianus Hierocles's *The Lover of Truth* that was addressed to Christians (at least for rhetorical purposes) and criticized Christianity as superstition and Christians as credulous people. These writings are extant only in fragments, often in Christian apologetic literature, but they nonetheless give important information about the non-Christian image of Christianity.⁹

The public image of Christianity seems to have been formed for two basic purposes before 313. The first purpose was to portray Christians as enemies, and the second one was to depict them as dependent others, which can be seen in assimilation rhetoric. By assimilation rhetoric I mean writings which aim to persuade others, usually the minority, to assimilate with 'us' and lose their own specific identity. What I define as the public image here consists solely of those writings that were targeted at a wider audience. This therefore excludes private correspondence, where, in contrast to these public depictions, there was not the same need to argue

⁷ There are some collections of the fragments, which are preserved mainly in Christian apologetic literature, especially of the Neoplatonist Porphyry's writings against the Christians. See, e.g., Porphyrius, '*Gegen die Christen*', ed. by Adolf von Harnack, *Abhandlungen der königlich preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-historische Klasse* (Berlin: Königl. Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1916); *Porphyry Against the Christians*, ed. and trans. by Robert M. Berchman (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

⁸ T. D. Barnes, 'Scholarship or Propaganda? Porphyry Against the Christians and its Historical Setting', *Bulletin of Institute of Classical Studies*, 39 (1994), 53–65.

⁹ Cf. W. H. C. Frend, 'Prelude to the Great Persecution: The Propaganda War', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 38 (1987), 1–18.

for certain attitudes or policies concerning Christians, for example, in Pliny the Younger's correspondence with Emperor Trajan concerning Christians at the beginning of the second century. Pliny's representation differed from the more general accusations, as he depicted Christians as quite harmless. For him the worst thing was their superstitious behaviour.¹⁰ In Pliny's time, Christians were accused of criminal acts, even ritual murders and cannibalism; these charges were a typical part of the image of foreign and alien religions.¹¹

The first purpose of the image was to depict Christians as an enemy and to persuade people, especially political leaders, to take action against Christians. An enemy image is needed in conflicts and violent encounters where it legitimates the use of violence and coercive measures. At the same time the enemy image reinforces a positive self-image. It is a valuable tool in the dehumanization of the other when people are fighting amongst themselves. Its principal purpose is to remove human, domestic, and individual elements from the image of the enemy.¹² There are many possible motives for this, such as attempting to form and direct national identity, to create national unity, to legitimate an aggressive policy towards an enemy, and to pursue aspirations in domestic policy. The enemy image of the Christians was created in the context of the third-century persecutions, which took place simultaneously with internal riots, civil wars, and external threats such as wars with Sassanian Persia. In the conditions of the third-century crisis, Christianity was perhaps seen as a threat to the integrity of the empire and Roman order because it questioned the religious justification of Roman power.

¹⁰ Plinius Minor, *Epistula*, 10. 96. The different interpretation of Pliny's attitude is presented in recent research by Jakob Engberg, *Impulsore Chresto: Opposition to Christianity in the Roman Empire c. 50–250 AD* (Berlin: Lang, 2007), p. 202. Engberg argues that Pliny 'saw Christianity as a highly decadent and contagious superstition'. The difference between our conclusions is due to the different interpretation of the term *superstitio*.

¹¹ A. McGowan, 'Eating People: Accusations of Cannibalism against Christians in the Second Century', *J ECS*, 2 (1994), 413–42; James B. Rives, 'Human Sacrifice among Pagans and Christians', *JRS*, 85 (1995), 65–85.

¹² Ofer Zur, 'The Love of Hating: The Psychology of Enmity', *History of European Ideas*, 13 (1991), 345–69 (p. 362). Cf. also Vilho Harle, *The Enemy with a Thousand Faces: The Tradition of the Other in Western Political Thought and History* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2000); Marilyn B. Brewer, *Intergroup Relations* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2003); Sinikka Wunsch, 'Image Research and the Enemy Image: The Soviet Union in Finnish Newspapers during the Winter War (November 30, 1939–March 13, 1940)', in *Looking At the Other: Historical Study of Images in Theory and Practise*, ed. by Kari Alenius, Olavi K. Fält, and Seija Jalagin (Oulu: Oulu University Press, 2002), pp. 81–98.

Based on a common psychological motivation, enemy images also have universal recurring features although they always have cultural colouring from the circumstances and culture in which they are created. The main function of the attributes given to the enemy image is to dehumanize the enemy. Typically, the enemy is ungodly and unholy, that is, it is depicted as something in conflict with our values and customs. Its attributes are inhuman: it is equivalent to bacilli, pests, vermins, dirt, and filth. Overall the enemy image projects onto the enemy all those attributes which are seen as opposite to us; thus in the process of forming an image of the enemy, we are inversely creating our own self-identity.¹³

The enemy image of the Christians is in its general features typical of hostile depictions of the others. As enemies Christians were seen to be ungodly, unholy, and opposed to the most important Roman values and customs. Christians were depicted as ritual murderers, cannibals, and criminals: all these depictions were a common part of the rhetoric of blame and a conventional part of the Graeco-Roman imagination with regard to enemies.

One of the most frequent accusations against Christians was the charge of atheism. It is also one of the most popular modern explanations for the persecution of Christians: they did not honour the gods and therefore they were persecuted. In more nuanced form, it is also suggested that Christians were persecuted because they did not worship emperors as gods.¹⁴ However, this is a historical stereotype, not reality. To state that Christians were persecuted because they abstained from worshipping the emperor as a god is to take Christian apologetic at face value: for the defence of Christianity, Christian writers tried to find common values that were acknowledged by both sides. Historically, Romans were often sceptical towards all political leaders who claimed to be gods themselves, and this was close to the Christian attitude towards non-Christian rulers. However, sources are in agreement that Christians were accused of denying the gods and neglecting the rituals and ceremonies of traditional, official religion.

As some adversaries claimed, Christians were impious (*dussebeis*) and atheists (*atheoi*). Christians had apostatized from the ancestral gods whom every country and nation had sustained.¹⁵ The Roman Empire was thought to be successful only

¹³ Zur, 'Love of Hating'; Harle, *The Enemy*.

¹⁴ See, e.g., de Ste Croix, 'Why Were the Early Christians Persecuted?', p. 112.

¹⁵ Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica*, 1.2. Some scholars regard this passage as a fragment deriving from Porphyry. I have criticized this view in my doctoral thesis 'Profani homines: The Image of Christianity in the Writings of the Non-Christian Graeco-Roman Elite in 260–313' (University of Oulu, 2009). For the traditional interpretation as a fragment from Porphyry, see *Porphyrius*,

under the protection of the gods. The Romans themselves saw their success and peace as due to *pax deorum*. Vergil wrote of the Roman mission given by the gods to rule the nations, spare the conquered, and suppress the proud. The destiny of the nations was believed to lie in the hands of the gods, and the Romans themselves were on the side of the gods. It follows that those who were opposed to the empire and the Graeco-Roman values were against the gods, too. Christians were alleged to have chosen impious morality (*asebeia*) and they fought against the gods. That is why it was righteous to inflict punishment on the Christians.¹⁶

Demands for punishment against Christians were made at Emperor Diocletian's court in the first years of the fourth century. There some philosophers insisted that Christianity should be restricted. Lactantius reports that one of them 'had, in short, consulted the interests of men, in order that, impious and foolish superstition (*impia et anili superstitione*) having been restrained, all men might have leisure for lawful sacred rites (*legitimis sacris*), and might experience the gods propitious to them'.¹⁷ Here, it was argued that divine favour depended on the ancestral ceremonies and rituals. The gods demanded certain rites such as sacrifices, which guaranteed divine favour. The neglect of rituals meant the loss of divine protection.

During the third-century crises, the loss of divine protection was connected to the Christians, among other religious groups. The oracles and the priests of the official religion blamed the Christians for the misfortunes. It was believed that the whole world would be devastated. Gods were driven away and they were no longer interested in helping the people because of the Christians' practices. Christians were blamed for the plagues, wars, draught, famine, locusts, mice, and storms.¹⁸ Most of the worries concerned agriculture, which was the mainstay of the economy.

It might at first be thought that these accusations based on religion came mainly from among the common people, but this is incorrect because, according to the sources from the third and fourth centuries, the accusers were not only the religious elite, but also philosophers and members of the political elite such as

ed. by von Harnack. For the critical view, see also *Eusèbe de Césarée, La Préparation évangélique. Livre I*, ed., intro., trans., and comm. by Jean Sirinelli and Édouard des Places, Sources Chrétiennes, 206 (Paris: Cerf, 1974).

¹⁶ Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica*, 1. 2.

¹⁷ Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones*, 5. 2; trans. by William Fletcher in *Fathers of the Third and Fourth Centuries: Lactantius, Venantius, Asterius, Victorinus, Dionysius, Apostolic Teaching and Constitutions, Homily, and Liturgies*, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 7 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1885), also published at <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf07.iii.ii.v.ii.html>>.

¹⁸ Arnobius, *Adversus nationes*, 1. 1, 1. 3.

Sossianus Hierocles, the *vicarius* and governor during Diocletian's reign. One of them was the Neoplatonist Porphyry who claimed in *Against the Christians* that Christianity had driven the gods away: 'now they wonder that for so many years the plague has attacked the city, Asclepius and the other gods being no longer resident among us. Since Jesus began to be honoured, no one ever heard of any public assistance from the gods.'¹⁹

Porphyry invoked the belief that the gods favour those who offer them appropriate sacrifices and perform correct religious rites. This implies another religious aspect, the dichotomy of the holy and the polluted. The Roman concept of a mutual relationship between the humans and the gods demanded of people not only continuous and correct observation of rituals but also purity. During his campaign against Persia in 297, Diocletian wanted to perform sacrifices in order to receive omens from the gods. When he consulted the leader of the *haruspices*, Tages, the priest told him that they did not have the usual omens because of the presence of Christians. Since there were profane persons (*profani homines*) present in the rituals, it was not possible to get holy answers from the gods.²⁰ According to the priests and Porphyry, the gods neither lived among the people nor were they interested in humans and their troubles. Because the gods were holy, they could not be mixed with the unholy. A Christian was *profanus*, outside the circle of holy things. The Christians were not sanctified properly; therefore, they were contaminated and they polluted others around them. Thus, the gods decided to leave the people on their own. The conception of the Christians as ungodly people and the accusations of immoral behaviour were the most important features in the enemy image.

The Image of Christians before 313: The Dependent Other

The assimilation rhetoric of the dependent other differs remarkably from the enemy image discussed above. First, it aims to separate the Christian laity from their leaders. The second difference is the emphasis on Jesus as a holy man. The purpose of this kind of rhetoric is to assimilate a religious minority to the majority. This rhetoric tries to affect the minority, which is thought to be weaker and lower than us.

Here I analyse those elements of the image that make Christians look not quite so dangerous or threatening, but rather as the inept other who is dependant on 'us'.

¹⁹ Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica*, 5. 1. 10; trans. by E. H. Gifford, *Eusebius Caesariensis, Evangelicae praeparationis libri*, XV (Oxford, 1903).

²⁰ Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum*, 10.

Some aspects are not easily classified because they include both threatening and weak aspects, for instance, the depiction as being feminine. Whereas the feminization of the image made Christians look like weak and ridiculous opponents, it also served to further segregate the enemy by emphasizing their alleged physical or genetic weakness. In Roman society, women were generally thought to be the weaker gender, which should be under protection and tutelage, but they were also seen as superstitious, credulous, and seductive. Thus, the gender stereotypes were used in the depiction of Christianity.

In *Philosophy from Oracles*, Porphyry depicted women as typical adherents of Christianity because they were thought to be easier targets for charlatans because of their weaker nature. Porphyry cited the oracle of Apollo: 'You will probably find it easier to write lasting characters on the water' or 'fly like a bird through the air, than to restore right feeling in your impious wife (*impiæ uxoris sensum*) once she has polluted herself.'²¹ As was mentioned above, the philosopher in the court depicted Christianity as 'old-womanish superstition' (*anilis superstitio*). In *Against the Christians*, Porphyry stated that women governed Christian communities rather than their priests, whose position depended on their popularity in the senate of women (*matronæ et mulieres sint noster senatus*).²² This made Christian communities look ridiculous in the context of gender stereotypes and attitudes of Graeco-Roman society in which men characteristically led official religion with only a few exceptions, such as the Vestal Virgins.

Christian leaders were nonetheless depicted more frequently as men of low origin. Sossianus Hierocles, the spokesman for traditional religion, and governor of Bithynia, called the Apostles Peter and Paul the 'disseminators of fallacy' (*fallaciae seminatores*). Hierocles mocked them and other Christian teachers as 'rude and unlearned' (*rudes et indoctos*) and stated that some of them made their living by fishing.²³ Similarly, in *Against the Christians*, Porphyry depicted Christian leaders as rustic and poor (*homines rustici et pauperes*). Since they possessed nothing, they fabricated some signs by magic arts. According to Porphyry, they worked out these things 'to obtain wealth from the wealthy weak women' (*ut divitias acciperent*

²¹ Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, 19. 23. Trans. by Marcus Dods, *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church: St. Augustine's City of God and Christian Doctrine*, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1886), also published at <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf102.iv.XIX.23.html>>.

²² Hieronymus, *Commentarii in Isaiam*, 3. 2.

²³ Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones*, 5. 2.

a divitibus mulierculis).²⁴ Ordinary Christians are clearly depicted as the dependent others who are cheated by their cunning leaders.

The image of the dependent other is also applied to labelling Christian leaders as cruel. This kind of depiction made a clear division between ordinary Christians and their leaders. Porphyry wrote of Peter that the apostle had committed ritual murder for the sake of divination: Peter had used magic in this 'foul rite' (*ritu nefario*) in which he had murdered a one-year-old boy and hacked him into pieces. Furthermore, Porphyry used Christian scriptures to prove the Christian leaders' cruelty and invoked the Christian Gospels and epistles, drawing attention to the conflict between Peter and Paul: to him this proved that the teaching of the apostles was fictitious and was used for the power struggles within Christian communities.²⁵ Peter was a cruel and cowardly man: he deceived people and even deceived his master when Jesus was imprisoned.²⁶ He could curse people to death if they did not give their property to him. Porphyry described Peter as praying for the death of Ananias and Sapphira and thus killing them.²⁷ Peter carried a sword even though his master advised him not to do so. In the end Peter was called a 'killer of men' (*androphonos*).²⁸ The label of cruelty and barbarity made Christians the enemies of humanity. The same theme appears in Tacitus's *Annals* in which it is stated that Christians hate the human race.²⁹ The Christian hatred was associated with irrational acts of violence that was practised by their leaders. It shows how ordinary Christians were subordinated and harassed. This part of the image thus reinforced the image of the dependant other who needs 'our' protection and, if needed, has to be forced to abandon its false religion or customs.

The feminization of the image as well as the division between subordinated ordinary Christians and their leaders were ambivalent ways of depicting the dependent other and creating assimilation rhetoric towards the minority. The same was also done by using the image of Jesus as a tool for assimilation. At least

²⁴ Hieronymus, *Commentarii in psalmos*, 81.

²⁵ Hieronymus, *Commentarii in epistolam Pauli apostoli ad Galatas*, prolog.; Hieronymus, *Commentarii in Isaiam*, 15. 54.

²⁶ Macarius, *Apocriticus*, 3. 22.

²⁷ Macarius, *Apocriticus*, 3. 21; Hieronymus, *Epistula*, 130.

²⁸ Johannes Chrysostomus, *Homilia in Johannis evangelium*, 83. This Porphyrian fragment comes from P. Nautin, "Trois autres fragments de livre du Porphyre "Contra les Chrétiens", *Revue biblique*, 57 (1950), 409–16. Berchman, *Porphyry*, fr. 110 has also included it in his collection of fragments.

²⁹ Tacitus, *Annales*, 15. 44.

three different depictions of Jesus can be discerned: a holy man, a robber, and a magician.

In *Philosophy from Oracles*, Porphyry described Jesus as a holy man who was pious (*pious*) and found his way to heaven as did other wise and good men. Thus, Porphyry's depictions of Christians as enemies differed from those in which Jesus was portrayed as a magician or even a robber as in the depiction by Hierocles. Instead, Porphyry cited the oracle of Hecate, which proclaimed Jesus as pious but at the same time declared that Christians themselves were hated by the gods and were involved in error.³⁰ A rhetorical division between Jesus and Christians is made here. Porphyry's oracle stated that this may be surprising to some people, probably meaning mainly Christians who regarded Jesus as a god or a divine person.³¹ The oracle of Apollo in Miletus was asked whether Jesus was a man or a god, and the answer was that Jesus was a wise man with his miraculous deeds.³² Here Jesus is equipped with the attributes that were typical of the late antique concept of a holy man. At the same time, Jesus was fitted into the Graeco-Roman pantheon. The intention of this kind of rhetoric is apparent in other polemical texts where non-Christian polemical authors argued that Jesus did not demand that people abandon all other gods except the Christian God. An anonymous Hellene compared the supreme god with the emperor who governed alone but did not exist alone; there were other people who were positioned under him. Even though there was the highest god, there were also lower gods. Thus, the one supreme god did not exclude other gods.³³

A number of non-Christians straightforwardly asked Christians why they did not share their holy rites with their fellow citizens. The question was directed at the collective heart of religion: it was supposed that every nation had its own gods. Christianity was a religious innovation in the sense that it produced a religious identity that was not national in its character. However, this should not be understood to mean that late antique Christianity achieved its ideal of universality in the full sense of the word. Some non-Christians inquired why Christians did not participate in the worship and rituals of other gods if they seriously revered the holy.³⁴

³⁰ Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, 19. 23.

³¹ Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, 19. 23.

³² Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones*, 4. 3. 11. Cf. Augustinus, *De consensu evangelistarum*, 1. 11.

³³ Macarius, *Apocriticus*, 4. 20–21.

³⁴ Arnobius, *Adversus nationes*, 3. 2.

The Image of Christians from 313 Onwards

The fourth century did not bring about the disappearance or defeat of paganism but a change in its status.³⁵ It is also important to note that rivalry between religious groups continued. Rivalry is also an essential factor in the image of Christianity after Emperor Constantine. The change in status affected the arguments. Rhetoric had to change according to the new social and political situation. Traditional religions were no longer the markers of Romanness, but instead Christianity became the marker of being Roman. In short, pagan rhetoric changed in the new situation more and more into apologetic.³⁶

There were still traces of the old image of Christianity in the new pagan apologetic rhetoric. Especially Emperor Julian's critique and attack against Christianity was similar to Porphyry's attack a few decades earlier. The depiction of Christians in Julian's *Against the Galileans* was extremely negative. As Anthony Meredith argues, for Julian the basic state of Christians was ignorance and lack of education (*apaidousia*).³⁷ According to Julian, Christianity was nothing but 'confusion, boorishness, and the word credulity'.³⁸ An inscription from Syria describes Julian as the destroyer of superstition, the reviver of the cults, and the renovator of the Roman world.³⁹ It is unclear if this allusion to superstition is an allusion to Christianity, but it nevertheless depicts Julian's pagan revival as the return to true Roman religion and depicts his acts against some other religious practices as just acts against false religiosity.

In the scholarly discussions, it is often presented that, as was the case with Porphyry, the main part of the opponents' polemic consisted of the criticism of religious, philosophical, and historical themes in Christianity. Thus Julian concentrated in his attack on the Christian revelation, the Jewish notion of God, and Jewish history as well as Christian doctrines and morality.⁴⁰ I disagree in part with

³⁵ Mary Beard, John North, and Simon Price, *Religions of Rome, I: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 365.

³⁶ See, for instance, Clifford Ando, 'Pagan Apologetics and Christian Intolerance in the Ages of Themistius and Augustine', *JECs*, 4 (1996), 171–207.

³⁷ Anthony Meredith, 'Porphyry and Julian Against the Christians', in *ANRW*, II. 23. 2 (1980), 1119–49 (p. 1139), refers to Julian (*Contra Galilaeos*, 229C, 238E).

³⁸ Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Oratio*, 4. 102.

³⁹ *L'Année épigraphique*, 1907, 191 (Baalbek, Syria).

⁴⁰ See, e.g., Meredith, 'Porphyry and Julian', pp. 1140–47; T. D. Barnes, 'Pagan Perceptions of Christianity', in *Early Christianity: Origins and Evolution to AD 600*, ed. by Ian Hazlett (London: SPCK, 1993), pp. 231–43 (p. 240).

this traditional interpretation because it does not sufficiently take into account that most of the extant polemical works (or fragments) of non-Christians have been transmitted to us by Christian apologetic literature. Christian apologists were part of the learned Christian elite who, it seems, focused on questions that were important to the Christian doctrine or Christian identity. Thus, these fragments in Christian literature did not necessarily include those arguments and elements of the image of Christianity that might have been of greater importance to non-Christian contemporaries.⁴¹ This is evident in the depictions of Christianity coming from outside of the fragmentary material preserved in Christian literature, for instance, Eunapius's and Julian's other writings apart from *Against the Galileans* (these preserved only through citations in Christian apologetic). There the focus is much more on the depiction of persons and groups, their intentions and acts, not on the doctrinal or philosophical questions.

Emperor Julian's Attack on Christian Morals, Education, and Irrational Atheism and Magic

Julian's depiction of Christians was connected to his rhetorical strategy of creating a strict boundary between Hellenism and Christianity and strengthening the unity of Hellenic religion. It is important to draw attention to this rhetorical separation of Christianity and Hellenic religion: it is not simple to establish as a historical fact that Christianity was not a Graeco-Roman religion. On the contrary, it was historically a creation of the Graeco-Roman religious world. Most contemporary adherents of Christianity were either Greeks or Romans. However, Julian emphasized the nature of Christianity as an alien superstition and the Christians as barbarians.⁴² He wanted to emphasize the difference and omit those aspects that were common to both non-Christians and Christians. As is well known, Julian banned Christians from holding teaching posts by a decree on 17 June 362. The decree insisted that those holding teaching posts should share the world view of the texts

⁴¹ Markus Mertaniemi, 'Acerrimus inimicus: Porphyry in Christian Apologetics', in *Continuity and Discontinuity in Early Christian Apologetics*, ed. by Jörg Ulrich, Anders-Christian Jacobsen, and Maijastina Kahlos (Frankfurt: Lang, 2009), pp. 97–112.

⁴² This view is already presented by Meredith, 'Porphyry and Julian', p. 1141: 'It may well have been the feeling that the Christians were so close to them that made the Neoplatonists protest so bitterly against them.' See also especially Jeremy M. Schott, 'Porphyry on Christians and Others: "Barbarian Wisdom", Identity Politics, and Anti-Christian Polemics on the Eve of the Great Persecution', *J ECS*, 13 (2005), 277–314.

(such as Homer) that they taught. It was argued that it was dishonest if one merely adopted the style and language or music and stories.⁴³ Julian also made forceful use of his rhetorical strategy against Christianity in *Against the Galileans*. He stated that if Christians claimed that their Scriptures were sufficient, why did they use Hellenic literature in their interpretation of their own Scriptures and in the formation of doctrinal ideas.⁴⁴ Julian's intention seems to have been exactly the opposite of the assimilation rhetoric discussed above. He wanted to separate Christianity entirely from other Graeco-Roman religions so that he could justify his political measures against Christianity.⁴⁵ In his polemic against the Christian 'dishonest' use of Hellenic literature, Julian implicitly revealed the historical fact that Christianity was based on the Hellenistic culture and that he invented a rhetorical boundary between Christianity and the 'true Hellenism'.

There is a slight difference in Julian's tone in his *Against the Galileans* and his private letters to his trustees. In a private letter to Arsacius, high priest of Galatia, Julian wrote that Hellenic religion (*Hellenismos*) was not progressing as he wished. 'The affairs of the gods are magnificent and mighty', Julian declared. He demanded that pagan priests follow the example of Christian priests: 'Do we not realise that what has really contributed to the growth of atheism (*atheotes*) is their generosity towards strangers, their care for the burial of the dead, and the dignified way of life that they feign?' Furthermore, Julian writes how shameful it is that no Jew needs to beg and 'ungodly Galileans' (*dussebeis Galilaiōi*) help their own and even others but 'our people are seen to lack assistance from us'.⁴⁶ Although he uses contemptuous terms such as 'Galileans', which points out the nature of Christianity as a sect, and refers to Christians as 'atheists', he describes Christian goodwill towards the poor and Christian high morals. However, in another letter to an anonymous priest, Julian stated that the Christian philanthropy was practised, not because of goodwill, but rather as a persuasive device to get people to convert to

⁴³ Julianus, *Epistula*, 61c, in *Imp. Caesaris Flavii Claudii Juliani Epistulae, leges, poematia, fragmenta varia*, ed. by Joseph Bidez and Franz Cumont (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1922) (= 36 in *The Works of the Emperor Julian*, III, trans. by Wilmer Cave Wright (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1923; repr. 1998)).

⁴⁴ Julianus, *Contra Galilaeos*, 229c.

⁴⁵ Cf. Barnes, 'Pagan Perceptions', p. 240: 'Julian composed *Against the Galileans* as part of a wholesale attempt to undo Constantine's establishment of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire and to replace the Christian Church with what was in effect a pagan church.'

⁴⁶ Julianus, *Epistula*, 84. 429c–431b, ed. by Bidez and Cumont (= 22, trans. by Wright); trans. by A. D. Lee, *Pagans and Christians in Late Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 97–98.

Christianity.⁴⁷ Julian's suspicion towards Christians' motives is interesting; in the formation of an enemy image, it is typical that others are seen as untrustworthy and treacherous.⁴⁸ This is a product of the human psyche: people think that their enemy cannot have any pure motives because the enemy is regarded as essentially evil.

Julian may have named Christians 'Galileans' because the term 'Christian' no longer had the same sectarian connotation that it had during its first three centuries. It has been suggested that Julian called Jesus 'the Nazarene' because it was predicted in Christian Scriptures that no prophet would come from Galilee.⁴⁹ If this is the case, he tried to show that Christianity had no universal position or widespread support as was claimed by Christian writers such as Eusebius in his *Church History*. The Hellenic identity developed over the course of centuries and it had different meanings for different persons so that, as Maijastina Kahlos states, to Emperor Julian Hellenism meant a certain form of religion whereas for Synesius of Cyrene (died c. 414) it meant culture above all.⁵⁰ It is important to take into account the social positions of the writers who presented their views of Hellenism. Julian gave content to the word Hellenism in his opposition to Christianity while Synesius was a Neoplatonist Christian bishop who clung to some of his own views based on non-Christian Neoplatonism. In a way, Synesius used assimilation rhetoric in which different traditions can be assimilated or they can live side by side.

Julian's depiction of Christian morals in his private letters clearly differed from Porphyry's and other earlier writers' views on Christians and even from his own views in *Against the Galileans*. 'Atheists' were generous and they lived a dignified way of life in contrast to some of Julian's fellow Hellenes. *Against the Galileans* did not mention Christian morality in this positive regard.

Julian directed *Against the Galileans* to a wider audience in order to convince people of the wickedness and barbarous nature of Christianity.⁵¹ He compared Paul to 'all the magicians and charlatans', whom the apostle surpassed. In another passage Julian mocked the Christian cult of saints and martyrs and gave the impression that the apostles had practised witchcraft at the tombs and performed spells

⁴⁷ Julianus, *Fragmentum epistulae*, 305C. In this letter Julian used exactly the same words of 'ungodly Galileans' as in the letter to the high priest Arsacius (Julianus, *Epistula*, 84a, ed. by Bidez and Cumont).

⁴⁸ Zur, 'Love of Hating', p. 350.

⁴⁹ *Works of the Emperor Julian*, trans. by Wright, p. 313.

⁵⁰ Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue*, pp. 20–21.

⁵¹ Julianus, *Contra Galilaeos*, 39A–B, 202A.

and had transmitted this tradition to contemporary Christians.⁵² When this image is compared to Porphyry's and Hierocles' depictions of the apostles and their followers, similarity is found even on the level of the words used of the Christian magic. Furthermore, Julian's mockery of the Christian cult of saints is remarkably similar to the description in Eunapius (to be discussed below).

According to Julian, Christians were 'neither Hellenes nor the Jews, belonging to the sect of Galileans', and had absorbed only the 'powers of evil' from the Hebrews and Hellenes: Christians had adopted 'atheism' from the Jews and a sordid and lewd way of living from the Hellenic tales.⁵³ Christians had adopted the ways of living from 'the baser sort, shopkeepers, tax-gatherers, dancers and libertines'.⁵⁴ According to Julian, Christians thought that they could purify their souls in baptism, but how could this rite purify the soul, he argued, if it could not purify the body or make it healthy? It could not remove adultery, theft, or any transgressions of the soul.⁵⁵

Julian's admirer, the rhetorician Libanius, used similar terms to describe those who did not participate in 'the worship of gods'.⁵⁶ Libanius did not use the words 'Christianity', 'Christians', or Julian's term 'Galileans' but instead he used implicit expressions such as 'impious ones', 'atheists', 'the polluted ones', 'the uninitiated', or wrote of those 'not knowing the gods' or those who have 'a false opinion about the gods'. He wrote about the enemies of the gods and the temples and 'men who intimidate us' and are 'our opponents'.⁵⁷ This depiction of Christians follows precisely the characteristics of the enemy image defined above.

One of the reasons for Julian's opposition to Christianity was his view of Christian morality as low. In his childhood, he had experienced a massacre in the imperial court: in the struggle for dynastic succession, the descendants of Emperor Constantine had killed their possible rivals. Julian's mother had been killed in his infancy and most of his other relatives during the following years.⁵⁸ This was certainly a great trauma for Julian throughout his whole life, and it perhaps affected

⁵² Julianus, *Contra Galilaeos*, 99E, 340A.

⁵³ Julianus, *Contra Galilaeos*, 43A–B; cf. also 238B–C.

⁵⁴ Julianus, *Contra Galilaeos*, 238E.

⁵⁵ Julianus, *Contra Galilaeos*, 245C–D.

⁵⁶ Libanius, *Oratio*, 18.

⁵⁷ For a detailed and excellent discussion, see Isabella Sandwell, *Religious Identity in Late Antiquity: Greeks, Jews and Christians in Antioch* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 92–93.

⁵⁸ Barnes, 'Pagan Perceptions', p. 240.

his attitude towards Christianity; this interpretation depends on whether Julian really associated Christianity with the murders in the court. Anyway, Julian did not hope for reconciliation with Christians, but on the contrary he tried to create strict boundaries between groups and weaken the position of Christianity in the Roman Empire. It could be that a childhood trauma directed Julian's later life and his attitude against Christianity.

Julian depicted Christian morality dimly in his depiction of Constantine in his *Caesars*, the book that was written almost at the same time as *Against the Galileans*. He claimed that Constantine had no model for his life among the gods but instead his idol was Luxury who taught Constantine to revere Incontinence, which was, according to Julian, next to Jesus in the Christian value scale. Jesus promised to purify seducers, murderers, the polluted, and the unholy.⁵⁹ Julian seems to have connected Constantine's behaviour and morals to Christianity in general through the immoral Jesus.

Julian's crude depiction brings forth the general views regarding the first Christian emperor among the non-Christians who were opposed to Christianity. It was partly deliberate propaganda intending to denigrate Christian leadership. Partly it was psychological effect in a conflictual situation that produced negative prejudices from the other when the other was experienced to be threat to us.

Julian's account of Constantine's morality can be compared with the account of the Christian military conduct in the *Roman History* of Ammianus Marcellinus (d. c. 391). The depiction of the Christian Emperor Constantius II's soldiers echoes the elements present in Julian's *Caesars*: soldiers were soft, corrupt, and lived in luxury. They liked to sleep in soft beds and their drinking goblets were heavier than their swords, an anecdote containing obvious irony towards the Christian military conduct. Instead of military songs, Christian soldiers recited indolent ditties — an allusion to the Christian prayers established by Constantine in the Roman army.⁶⁰ These soldiers were soft and feeble, hardly capable of defending the empire against its enemies. The soldiers whom Constantius left Julian were, according to Zosimus and Libanius, incapable of anything other than praying.⁶¹

As was mentioned above, Julian called Jesus 'the Nazarene'; the main intention with this was to show that Jesus was not God or the Saviour as Christians thought but rather a human offspring and of local origin. Julian even used more

⁵⁹ Julianus, *Caesares*, 336A–B.

⁶⁰ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 22. 4. 6.

⁶¹ Zosimus, *Historia nova*, 3. 3. 2; Libanius, *Oratio*, 18. 94.

contemptuous terms, calling Jesus only a corpse, or in another passage he stated, 'they [i.e. Christians] have abandoned the ever living gods and have gone over to the corpse of the Jew'.⁶² Jesus had only been known for a little over three hundred years, and during his lifetime he did not do anything worth hearing about.⁶³ Christians were so misguided that they did not remain faithful even to the teaching of the apostles but altered their teaching into something worse and more impious. Julian emphasized that Paul, Matthew, Luke, and Mark did not call Jesus God. John invented this by himself when he understood that people would be easily persuaded to worship even the tombs of Peter and Paul, and large numbers of people in the towns of Greece and Italy were 'infected by this disease'.⁶⁴ Julian referred to the worship of the corpse in his letter to the people of Bostra in which he implied that Christians had apostatized from the gods to 'corpses and relics'.⁶⁵

As was mentioned above, Christian apologists were selective when they refuted non-Christian polemic. Cyril of Alexandria, who has mainly transmitted to us the content of *Against the Galileans*, admitted that he omitted the insults on Jesus, which he thought might contaminate Christians.⁶⁶ However, Julian's depiction in his *Caesars* gives us a clue to the insults in question: Jesus was associated with immorality.

The Denigration of Christian Leaders and Other Important Figures

At the end of the fourth century, Eunapius of Sardis, a Hellene historian and rhetor, wrote in *Lives of the Sophists*, 'Constantine was emperor and was pulling down the most celebrated temples'.⁶⁷ Eunapius compared Constantine and some of his advisers with the Athenians who killed Socrates; Eunapius referred to Sopater, a non-Christian imperial adviser who was killed. Constantine loved to be applauded in the theatres 'by men so drunk that they could not hold their liquor'.⁶⁸

⁶² Julianus, *Contra Galilaeos*, 194D–197C.

⁶³ Julianus, *Contra Galilaeos*, 191D–E.

⁶⁴ Julianus, *Contra Galilaeos*, 327A–B. Julian called Christianity a disease on other occasions as well. See Julianus, *Oratio*, 7. 299D; Julianus, *Epistula*, 98. 401C, ed. by Bidez and Cumont (= 58, trans. by Wright).

⁶⁵ Julianus, *Epistula*, 114. 438C, ed. by Bidez and Cumont (= 41, trans. by Wright).

⁶⁶ For more detail, see *Works of the Emperor Julian*, trans. by Wright, p. 314.

⁶⁷ Eunapius, *Vitae sophistarum*, 461.

⁶⁸ Eunapius, *Vitae sophistarum*, 462.

A similar tone is found in the Hellene Zosimus's *New History* in which 'Constantine was the origin and beginning of the present destruction of the empire' whereas Emperor Diocletian, who began the Great Persecution of Christians, deliberately strengthened the defence of the empire.⁶⁹ Constantine as well as his son Constantius were both impious and murdered their relatives.⁷⁰ A Christian emperor was portrayed as lacking the basic virtues of a Roman emperor, namely self-control, piety, clemency, and military skills.

Soon after Julian's death, Eunapius of Sardis stated that Christianity 'was gaining the upper hand and taking hold of everything'.⁷¹ This happened during the 370s and 380s. According to Eunapius, the Christian Emperor Theodosius I (378–95) turned his army against non-Christian religious places and constituted laws against other religions. Roman soldiers committed sacrilege and impiety when they assaulted temples and other holy places and destroyed statues of the gods and votive offerings. The Christian Bishop of Alexandria, Theophilus (d. 412), was compared to Eurymedon who presided over the proud giants who attacked the gods. Theophilus's followers were 'the cursed ones'.⁷²

Julian also criticized Christian leaders. In *Against the Galileans*, Julian mentions the Church historian and Bishop Eusebius; the 'wretched Eusebius' had claimed that there also were poems in hexameter among the Jews and tried thus to argue that the Judaeo-Christian culture could be valued on the same level with Hellenism.⁷³ In another passage, Julian wrote of a 'learned bishop' who could not answer when Julian asked for an interpretation of the story concerning Cain and Abel. This bishop most of all deceived himself and other people too.⁷⁴ The depiction of important Christian figures was not limited only to Christian emperors and bishops.

The most outstanding part of Eunapius's depiction of Christianity is his portrayal of Christian monks at Alexandria and Canopus. He described black-robed monks living the life of swine whose moral conduct was low: they 'openly did and allowed countless unspeakable crimes'. Christian monks thought that piety meant

⁶⁹ Zosimus, *Historia nova*, 2. 34.

⁷⁰ Zosimus, *Historia nova*, 2. 40.

⁷¹ Eunapius, *Vitae sophistarum*, 461.

⁷² Eunapius, *Vitae sophistarum*, 472.

⁷³ Julianus, *Contra Galilaeos*, 222A.

⁷⁴ Julianus, *Contra Galilaeos*, 347B.

‘to show contempt for things divine’. Those who wore their black robes and behaved in this way were like tyrants, so great was their power during those days.⁷⁵

Eunapius claimed that the monks were settled in Canopus where they ‘fettered the human race to the worship of slaves, and those not even honest slaves, instead of the true gods’. The monks collected bones and skulls of martyrs who were malefactors guilty of many wrongdoings:

criminals who had been put to death for numerous crimes, men whom the law courts of the city had condemned to punishment, made them out to be gods, haunted their sepulchres, and thought that they became better by defiling themselves at their graves. Martyrs the dead men were called, and ministers of a sort, and ambassadors from the gods to carry men’s prayers, — these slaves in vilest servitude, who had been consumed by stripes and carried on their phantom forms the scars of their villainy.⁷⁶

Eunapius’s colourful depiction was not the only case where Christian martyrdom was contested. In addition, Julian wrote that ‘evil demons’ were appointed to punish atheists by madness so that they ‘are induced to court death in the belief that they will fly up to heaven’.⁷⁷ Both Eunapius and Julian described Christian monks who lived in the desert ‘since they have been given over to evil demons and are led by them into this hatred of humankind (*misanthropia*)’.⁷⁸

The rhetor Libanius portrayed monks as misanthropes and hostile people who forced others to change their religious conviction. Monks were the black-robed tribe. They consumed more food than elephants and were drunkards. Although the law did not allow popular attacks on the temples, this scattered rabble committed countless crimes and demolished temples, statues, and altars.⁷⁹ Furthermore, Libanius tells us of the Bishop of Antioch who did not really prevent the acts of the monks but instead commended them and sent the victims off with the words, ‘they are lucky to have got off so lightly’.⁸⁰ This seems to be a reliable account of the application of the law towards the pagan minority: although formally the law still protected pagans in some matters, their weaker position helped fanatical Christians to use loopholes to discriminate against pagans. This phenomenon can also be

⁷⁵ Eunapius, *Vitae sophistarum*, 472.

⁷⁶ Eunapius, *Vitae sophistarum*, 472; trans. by W. C. Wright, *Philostratus and Eunapius: The Lives of the Sophists* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952).

⁷⁷ Julianus, *Fragmentum epistulae*, 288B; trans. by Wright, *Works of the Emperor Julian*, p. 297.

⁷⁸ Julianus, *Fragmentum epistulae*, 288B; trans. by Wright, *Works of the Emperor Julian*, p. 297.

⁷⁹ Libanius, *Oratio*, 30. 8–9.

⁸⁰ Libanius, *Oratio*, 30. 11.

discerned in other historical societies in the relationships between majorities and minorities, the powerful and the subordinated.

Christian Treason, the Decline of the Ancient Virtues, and the Fall of Rome

Eunapius's negative description of monks was part of the account on Alaric's invasion of Greece and Eunapius's implication of monks' treason. He presented two reasons for the barbarian success in invading the country under Alaric's leadership: the first reason was 'the impiety (*asebeia*) of the men clad in black raiment'; the second reason was the transgression of the law and the neglect of the duties in the hierophantic ordinances.⁸¹ As Robert J. Penella states, 'it is not clear whether Eunapius is referring here to Theodosius's anti-pagan legislation or to the ritual unfitness of the last hierophant; perhaps he is referring to both'.⁸² In both cases, the blame was on Christianity, either in the neglect of Hellenic religion or in the monks who betrayed their country and cooperated with Alaric.

Christian treason is also implied in the non-Christian historian Ammianus Marcellinus's *Res gestae*. Ammianus tells us of the Christian bishop of Bezabde who helped the Persian king Shapur storm the city by revealing to Shapur the weak points in the city walls.⁸³ Some modern scholars maintain that Ammianus defended the Christian bishop against these accusations, which 'obtained wide currency': Ammianus stated that the 'suspicion [...] in my opinion was ill founded'. T. D. Barnes argues convincingly that Ammianus 'had learned from Tacitus how to use rumours to suggest disreputable conduct or a dishonest motive while taking no authorial responsibility for the dubious information thus conveyed'.⁸⁴ This was the safest way to disseminate suspicions against Christian leaders in the conditions where the highest political power was in the hands of Christians. Barnes's argument sounds plausible because it is difficult to find in Ammianus's history any allusion to Christianity and Christians which would have been without reservation positive.

⁸¹ Eunapius, *Vitae sophistarum*, 476.

⁸² Robert J. Penella, *Greek Philosophers and Sophists in the Fourth Century A.D.: Studies in Eunapius of Sardis* (Leeds: Francis Cairns, 1990), p. 143.

⁸³ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 20. 7. 9.

⁸⁴ T. D. Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation of Historical Reality* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), p. 88.

It is interesting that Eunapius used such strong words against Christian leaders if we can count monks among them; this seems to me one clue to the continuance of the fight over religious hegemony in the Roman Empire after the fourth century. He wrote his *Lives of the Sophists* under the reign of Theodosius's two sons, Arcadius and Honorius. Arcadius seems to have been a relatively weak ruler who was more interested in Christianity than in political and military issues. The weakness of the government perhaps made the harsh critique of Christianity possible. Arcadius is known to have allowed non-Christians to practise their religion, which Eunapius gladly recognized; Eunapius may even have tried to argue for forbearance towards Hellenic religion after Theodosius's coercive policy.⁸⁵

There are traces of the old image of Christianity (from before 313) visible as well. For instance, an ordinary Christian is sometimes portrayed as superstitious.⁸⁶ Eunapius described Constantine as 'wrapped up in the Christians' books' which makes a connotation of the irrational and barbaric nature of these books.⁸⁷ Julian disseminated this image of Christian Scriptures in *Against the Galileans*, stating,

I was convinced that the fabrication of the Galileans is a fiction of men composed by wickedness. Though it has in it nothing divine, by making full use of that part of the soul which loves fable and is childish and foolish, it has induced men to believe that the monstrous tale is truth.⁸⁸

On another occasion, Julian labelled Christians as misguided and foolish and continued addressing Christians saying, 'you regard those chronicles of yours as divinely inspired'. No one would become wiser, braver, or better by reading Christian writings.⁸⁹

Christianity was given as the reason for destruction and disasters until the sixth century. Julian and his circle presented Christianity as the decline from the ancient virtues. Libanius depicted the change from Julian's religious revival back to Christianity as a marker for the decline of the period.⁹⁰ Many other writers remained anonymous, but the Hellene historian Zosimus declared openly in his *New History*

⁸⁵ Eunapius, *Historia*, fr. 59. R. C. Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire: Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus and Malchus. Text, Translation and Historiographical Notes* (Liverpool: Francis Cairns, 1983).

⁸⁶ Ando, 'Pagan Apologetics', p. 205.

⁸⁷ Eunapius, *Vitae sophistarum*, 465.

⁸⁸ Julianus, *Contra Galilaeos*, 39A–39B; trans. by Wright, *Works of the Emperor Julian*, p. 319.

⁸⁹ Julianus, *Contra Galilaeos*, 230A.

⁹⁰ Libanius, *Oratio*, 2.

that the neglect of Hellenic religion was the reason for the decline of the Roman Empire as well as the barbarization of the empire. His main aim was to show how Romans lost their empire because of 'their own crimes'.⁹¹ Christianity meant barbarism and decadence — accusations that Augustine of Hippo answered in his *City of God*. The charge of Christianity as the reason for the decline shows how mental images are long lasting. They may remain latent during certain periods but then resurface when historical circumstances change. The permanence of the image is even more meaningful since the image of Christianity as the reason for the decline of the Roman Empire has been repeated in early modern literature and modern scholarship, for instance, in Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. This longevity shows how important the historical research of the images of otherness is because the images can be deep rooted.

The Rhetoric of Silence Concerning Matters Important for Christian Identity

One significant strategy, perhaps more common and more remarkable than modern scholars have realized, was to omit important aspects belonging to the Christian identity. A good example is Ammianus Marcellinus, a 'soldier and Hellene' (*miles quondam et Graecus*), who openly criticized the mutual controversies between Christians but mainly presented his opposition in a veiled way.⁹² Ammianus

⁹¹ Zosimus, *Historia nova*, 1. 1, 1. 57.

⁹² For an excellent analysis and discussion of the hidden opposition, see Barnes, *Ammianus*, pp. 79–94. There are significant differences in the modern scholarship regarding Ammianus's religious orientation and his attitude towards Christianity. Barnes (*ibid.*, p. 83) presents as an 'apparent contradiction' when Ammianus 'uses Christian language while implicitly disparaging the importance of Christianity'. To me there is no 'apparent contradiction' because Ammianus did not use any specific Christian language but the language that was common to all in the late antique Graeco-Roman world. Barnes takes as an example the passage in which Ammianus (*Res gestae*, 25. 4. 2.) depicts Julian's virtues, among them chastity: the Emperor was 'so spectacularly and incorruptly chaste that after the loss of his wife he never tasted the pleasures of sex' (*Ammianus*, p. 84). Chastity was not only a Christian value but was part of the common values in late antique culture. Cf. Symmachus, *Relatio*, 3. 11: 'honor solus est in illo veluti stipendio castitatis'. See, e.g., Patricia Cox, *Biography in Late Antiquity: A Quest for the Holy Man* (Berkeley: California University Press, 1983), pp. 25–30, who states that Eusebius's Origen and Porphyry's Plotinus are much alike in their asceticism. Common values are seen in the accusations against Christianity, e.g. in Porphyry's and Julian's polemic, in which Christians are intentionally depicted as immoral by appealing to common values: see, e.g., Julian's depiction of Constantine's morals. Inversely, modern scholars

wrote during the reign of the strong Christian Emperor Theodosius I. Thus, the religious-political situation was different from the time of Eunapius who wrote during Arcadius's weak and more tolerant rule. T. D. Barnes states that Ammianus's intention in his omissions was to marginalize Christianity.⁹³ I basically agree with Barnes, but there may also have been issues, as R. Seager argues, that Ammianus did not regard as worth mentioning in his *Res gestae* even though they were important to contemporary Christians.⁹⁴

First, Ammianus gives a detailed account of Roman policies in Armenia during Valens's reign but does not mention the Christian Nerses although he was a pro-Roman opponent of King Pap who was hostile to Rome and murdered Nerses; this was a central event in Armenia at that time. The political murder and its meaning are known only through a more accurate account of the Armenian historian P'awstos Buzand. Second, Ammianus omits the ecclesiastical affairs that were in the centre of imperial politics such as the conflicts in Alexandria or the Church councils between the years 353 and 360.⁹⁵ Christianity or Christian churches are not present on the general level in Ammianus's history but are present only on the

suggested some decades ago that the revival of classical poetry and mythology was the trace of living 'paganism', but in recent scholarship it has been shown that this poetry has an overwhelmingly Christian audience. One of the most renowned mythological epics was written by the Christian poet Nonnus who in earlier scholarship was interpreted as a pagan, but now it is acknowledged that he was a Christian during the time he was writing. See Alan Cameron, 'Poetry and Literary Culture in Late Antiquity', in *Approaching Late Antiquity: The Transformation from Early to Late Empire*, ed. by Simon Swain and Mark Edwards (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 327–54 (p. 341). See also the introduction in this article. Cf. Gavin Kelly, *Ammianus Marcellinus: The Allusive Historian* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 156–58.

⁹³ Barnes, *Ammianus*, p. 81.

⁹⁴ Cf. the criticism of Barnes's interpretation by Robin Seager in *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, 1999.04.13, <<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/bmcr/1999/1999-04-13.html>>: 'All these omissions surely follow from the fundamental generic doctrine that church history was not part of history. AM did not invent that doctrine, and he can hardly be blamed for adhering to it, however much that decreases the value of his work for our purposes.' However, Seager admits that Ammianus 'was a pagan and disliked and despised Christianity'. Many of the events or phenomena omitted were not only important for Church history, but also for Roman history. For instance, emperors were themselves involved in Church councils. The change in religious policy was remarkable and affected the actual policy in Roman society. This is seen in foreign policy towards Persia in which the persecutions of Christians were used as the pretext for war. Religion was part of Roman history all the time and cannot be explained away only by putting it to some modern category of religion or Church history.

⁹⁵ Seager, review of T. D. Barnes, *Ammianus Marcellinus*.

level of anecdotes and mainly negative ones. Third, Ammianus denigrates the geographical areas that were important to Christian identity. Constantinople, the real capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, was 'the ancient Byzantium, an Athenian colony'.⁹⁶ In another passage, Ammianus gives an account of the most prominent cities in the Syrian region in Palestine covering Caesarea, Eleutheropolis, Neapolis, Ascalon, and Gaza but does not mention Jerusalem, which Constantine had transformed into a rich and monumental city and was a place of abundant pilgrimage to Christian holy places.⁹⁷

The fourth and the most significant omission is concerned with Christian martyrs during Julian's reign. Christian sources mentioned some martyrs.⁹⁸ Ammianus mentions only one victim, Artemius,⁹⁹ whom he does not interpret as a martyr, but regards as a criminal who was executed 'for a mass of horrible crimes' (*atrocium criminum mole*).¹⁰⁰ There was also a conspiracy against Julian, and its purpose was to kill the Emperor. Two of the conspirators were Christians; they were the only ones killed while the rest of the group was pardoned. Ammianus does not mention these persons who were later called martyrs in the Christian tradition.¹⁰¹

These omissions are interesting from the viewpoint of rhetorical strategy: as Barnes states, Ammianus seems to have wanted to give an account of Julian's reign without Christian martyrs.¹⁰² On the other hand, Ammianus refers to Christian martyrs, but these were killed by the Alexandrian mob. The Emperor condemned 'this abominable deed', although he eventually did nothing to punish those who had been involved in the mob violence. Ammianus also distances himself from this interpretation by using the passive voice and thus implies that he is not sure of (or

⁹⁶ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 22. 8. 8.

⁹⁷ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 14. 8. 11–12.

⁹⁸ Barnes, *Ammianus*, p. 53; Hanns Christoph Brennecke, *Studien zur Geschichte der Homöer: Der Osten bis zum Ende der homöischen Reichskirche*, Beiträge zur Historischen Theologie, 73 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1988), pp. 114–57; Robert J. Penella, 'Julian the Persecutor in Fifth-Century Church Historians', *Ancient World*, 24 (1993), 31–43.

⁹⁹ Artemius was honoured as a saint and martyr in Constantinople. Samuel N. C. Lieu, 'From Constantine to Julian. [John the Monk], Artemii passio', in *From Constantine to Julian: Pagan and Byzantine Views. A Source History*, ed. by Samuel N. C. Lieu and Dominic Montserrat (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 210–62 (p. 214).

¹⁰⁰ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 22. 11. 2.

¹⁰¹ See, e.g., Johannes Chrysostomus, *In sanctos martyres Iuveninum et Maximinum* (PG, 50). Barnes, *Ammianus*, p. 53.

¹⁰² Barnes, *Ammianus*, p. 53.

does not accept) their role as 'martyrs' (*et nunc martyres appellantur*).¹⁰³ His opinion is expressed through the imperial councillor who advises the Emperor not to execute the decurions from the three towns because 'these men whom you order to be put to death as criminals the Christian religion will honour as martyrs (that is to say divine)'.¹⁰⁴

With regard to martyrs, Christian and non-Christian historiography differed remarkably from one another. Julian wrote of Christian martyrs' madness which led them to surrender to the authorities; it was due to evil demons that they lost their senses. Ammianus's attitude resembles Eunapius's depiction of Christian martyrs in which Christian martyrs were depicted as criminals condemned to death for their crimes. The opponents of Christians presented the coercive policy and violence against Christians as the Christians' own fault, or as in the case of Ammianus, they did not mention them at all. Coercion was not mentioned, although this is by no means exceptional: it is characteristic of enemy images that violence is seen as justified against the enemy labelled as evil.

Pagan Apologetics Depicts Christianity as One Way to Truth

The senator Symmachus and the rhetor Themistius are the clearest examples of pagan apologists. Since Constantine, Christian policy had changed to be more oppressive. If Christians had to fight for their lives in the third century, now it was the Hellenes and others who had to defend their right to exist or to practise their religion. Again, there were traces of the third-century image and rhetoric, now applied to the new conditions. Porphyry had presented Jesus as a holy man and as one possible model to the life according to the will of the gods although his pupils had misunderstood him and invented doctrines for themselves, which had led them astray. Thus, the gods hated Christians.

Symmachus invoked a similar kind of assimilative rhetoric in which different religious traditions could have lived side by side. The gods did not hate Christians as in Porphyry's version, but instead they could be worshipped in many different ways:

¹⁰³ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 22. 11. 9.

¹⁰⁴ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 27. 7. 6 (Ammianus Marcellinus, *History*, III, with an English trans. by John C. Rolfe, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1939; repr. 1972)): 'hos enim, quos interfici tamquam noxios iubet, ut martyras (id est divinitati acceptos) colet religio Christiana'.

Everyone has his own customs, his own religious practices; the divine mind has assigned to different cities different religions to be their guardians. Each man is given at birth a separate soul; in the same way each people is given its own special genius to take care of its destiny [...]. Let us imagine that Rome herself stands in your presence and pleads with you thus, 'Best of emperors, fathers of your country, respect my length of years won for me by the dutiful observance of rite, let me continue to practise my ancient ceremonies, for I do not regret them. Let me live in my own way, for I am free [...]. It is reasonable that whatever each of us worships is really to be considered one and the same. [...] What does it matter what practical system we adopt in our search for the truth? Not by one avenue only can we arrive at so tremendous a secret.'¹⁰⁵

People may attain knowledge about the gods through different philosophies and rites, thus also through Christianity, but Christianity is not the only way.¹⁰⁶ As Porphyry had written, Christ was a holy man among others but he was not a god because gods did not die and Jesus died on the cross. Symmachus's assimilation rhetoric is strikingly different from the rhetoric of strict dichotomies in Julian's *Against the Galileans* and especially from the rhetoric used against Christianity during the period of persecutions.

Symmachus's rhetoric was similar to Themistius's plea for religious forbearance towards different religious practices: Themistius used an allegory of many paths, which could be used to approach the divine.¹⁰⁷ It seems that, in the fourth-century non-Christian literature, Christianity was more likely depicted as a religion (*religio Christiana*)¹⁰⁸ instead of a superstition for apologetic purposes.

Although Symmachus accepted Christianity as one way to seek truth and religious observance, he wanted to continue practising his own religion. It is important to note that in their legislation Christian emperors did not forbid Symmachus and his fellows from worshipping the gods privately or from thinking whatever they liked. What they banned were the public symbols and presentations of 'paganism'. The public practice of non-Christian rites became illegal gradually. This gradual progression of persecution is typical of the action against persecuted minorities: it can be seen in other historical contexts such as in the Nazi policy towards Jews in the 1930s.

¹⁰⁵ Symmachus, *Relatio*, 3. 8–9; trans. by R. H. Barrow, *Prefect and Emperor: The 'Relationes' of Symmachus A.D. 384* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), pp. 39–41.

¹⁰⁶ Symmachus, *Relatio*, 3. Cf. Ambrosius, *Epistulae*, 17–18 (= 71–72, CSEL, 82.3).

¹⁰⁷ Themistius, *Oratio*, 5. 69 a.

¹⁰⁸ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 27. 7. 6.

The Christian Emperor Gratian (375–83) removed the Altar of Victory from the Roman senate and refused to become *pontifex maximus*, the high priest of the Roman religion that all the preceding emperors had customarily been. He also confiscated the revenues and immunities of temples and priesthoods. Gratian was the emperor who abolished the association of the state and ‘paganism’.¹⁰⁹

Symmachus appealed in the name of the senate to Emperor Valentinian I for the return of the Altar of Victory to the Curia. This was, of course, a matter of politics; the religious hegemony of Christianity, the unity of the empire, and the power of the Christian court were matters of utmost importance for the new Christian elite. They needed legitimation for their privileged position in the same way as the non-Christian elite did in the third-century crisis. When ‘barbarians’ were threatening the empire, there was no place for forbearance. Instead, Theodosius I implemented a coercive policy against all other forms of religion but the accepted ‘orthodox’ Christianity.

In fact, Symmachus appealed to the common threat of barbarians: ‘We are not on such good terms with the barbarians that we can do without an Altar of Victory!’ It is worth noting that Symmachus attempted to create a sense of common benefit and cohesion among the people of the empire by using the threat of barbarians as a rhetorical tool. Now, Christians were also counted as Romans, not barbarians as they had been earlier in the third century and in the beginning of the fourth century. However, Symmachus’s plea was strongly opposed, especially by Ambrose, the bishop of Milan. Thus, Symmachus’s petition was rejected although he invoked the examples of the earlier Christian emperors in the toleration of other religions: ‘the earlier emperors venerated our ancestral religious rites, the later did not abolish them’.¹¹⁰ The Roman world was becoming Christian, and the Christian elite wanted to suppress the ‘superstition’ of other religions. There were many reasons for the coercive policy but not least of them was the hostile enemy image created by those who wanted pagans suppressed. In this situation, Symmachus tried to create the image in which both Christians and pagans were Romans. Whereas Porphyry and Julian had used vituperative rhetoric, Symmachus used apologetic.

¹⁰⁹ Barrow, *Prefect and Emperor*, p. 5.

¹¹⁰ Symmachus, *Relatio*, 3. 3.

Conclusion

This article focused on the ways in which non-Christians formed Christians into 'others', outsiders or aliens to 'us'. It gave a general view of the most important aspects of the formation of the Christians in written non-Christian sources during the period from the third century through the fifth century. The starting point was the scholarly view (Brown, Cameron) according to which the Christian and non-Christian Greeks and Romans eventually shared many of the values in their world. Even in the historical reality we can see the similarity in the morals and norms while at the level of language, we have observed how contemporaries created a strict dichotomy between the groups. Violence, persecution, and discrimination were part of the late antique world. However, these conflicts were not continuous and there were remarkable periods of peaceful coexistence. The peaceful coexistence and similar moral worlds lead us to inquire into the role of language and discourse in the strict dichotomies and their effect on the political reality.

Until the declaration of toleration by Constantine and Licinius in 313, Christians were in the position of a discriminated minority, but from that day onwards, little by little, they gained the majority position from both population and power perspectives when the main political leaders also converted to Christianity. These changes affected the image which was created of Christians.

The Christians were seen as an 'enemy' or dependent 'other' before the declaration of toleration in 313. These images were used to legitimate the 'persecutions' of Christians. It cannot be verified whether this was always the policy intended by the authors writing about Christians, but the least we can say is that their hostile or degrading language created the atmosphere which was the precondition for persecution. These images were created during the turbulent third century when Christians were perhaps seen as a threat to the Roman order because, among other things, they criticized the authority of Roman religion which legitimated political power. Rhetorical conventions also explained the details and motifs of the written depictions. The image of the dependant other might also have included the motive to assimilate the degraded, weaker Christian 'other' by persuasive rhetoric such as presenting Jesus as a holy man although not a god.

The non-Christian image of Christianity was transformed after the declaration of toleration in 313. In non-Christian literature, Christianity was slowly transformed from a *superstitio* to the *religio Christiana*, the single possible way to approach the divine. There were some setbacks, such as Julian's reign (361–63) during which the old image of the atheistic, immoral, and credulous Christians was dominant as part of the court propaganda supporting the cause of Julian's

Hellenism. At the end of the fourth century, as the balance of power shifted, non-Christians were increasingly pressured and were thus forced to resort to apologetic writing. The non-Christian apologists depicted Christians as Romans in order to create the sense of common values against barbarians. This was in contrast to the third century when, according to the conventions of vituperative rhetoric, Christians had been depicted as barbarians, alien to Romans.

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THE SHADOW OF THE SHADOW: EXAMINING FOURTH- AND FIFTH-CENTURY CHRISTIAN DEPICTIONS OF PAGANS

Maijastina Kahlos

So encountered, the 'other' is herself or himself constructed by opposition, so that even where we may catch authentic glimpses of their shadows these serve only the purposes of the self being so shaped.

Judith Lieu¹

Research on the ancient representations of the religious or ethnic other inevitably deals with shadows. At best we glimpse only a dim reflection of these representations which themselves are mere shades of people who existed in flesh and blood. This applies to a great extent to the Christian depictions of people whom Christian writers called pagans.²

Pagans as represented in Christian literature fulfilled various needs and purposes in late antique society. My analysis of fourth- and fifth-century Christian depictions of pagans is divided into three sections. The first part discusses the conceptualization of paganism while the second part introduces several essential elements of the image. In the third part I examine the use of the images with a number of examples and finally discuss some implications of the depictions.

¹ Judith Lieu, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 314.

² R. A. Markus, 'Gregory the Great's Pagans', in *Belief and Culture in the Middle Ages: Studies Presented to Henry Mayr-Harting*, ed. by Richard Gameson and Henrietta Leyser (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 23–34 (p. 23), correctly insists that before undertaking our research on pagans, we need to define whether we are speaking of 'pagans' in our own modern terms or of 'pagans' as they were conceived by early Christian authors. In this article pagans are discussed as they were conceived by late antique Christian writers.

I

Inventing Pagans

As is well known, 'pagans' and 'paganism' were concepts invented and utilized by Christian writers to refer to religious others.³ 'Pagans' and 'paganism' are relative concepts which means that they only exist in relation to the concepts of 'Christians' and 'Christianity'.⁴ Christian authors made ample use of the term paganism, harnessing it to the project of constructing Christianity. They built and polarized lines of demarcation between Christians and pagans.⁵

In the Christian construction of paganism, a wide variety of Greek, Roman, and other cults, beliefs, and practices were grouped together.⁶ Despite syncretistic tendencies during the empire, many of these cults had very little in common with each other. The adherents of these many different religious cults and traditions did

³ Thus, the words 'pagans' and 'paganism' should be read with inverted commas throughout this article. The same applies to the words 'heretics', 'heresy', and 'Arianism'. Furthermore, to be accurate, quotation marks should be set around the words 'Christian' and 'Christianity'. As Keith Hopkins, 'Christian Number and its Implications', *JECS*, 6 (1998), 185–226 (p. 186), reminds us, the term Christian is 'more a persuasive than an objective category'.

⁴ For the dichotomous relationship between the concepts of paganism and Christianity, see Maijastina Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue: Christian and Pagan Cultures, c. 360–430* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 15–28; see also J.-C. Fredouille, 'Heiden', in *RAC*, XIII (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1986), pp. 1113–49 (p. 1115).

⁵ The contradistinction between Christians and pagans is still influencing the modern patterns of perceiving ancient religious history even though the dichotomy has successfully been challenged in late antique studies, e.g., by Markus Vinzent, 'Das "heidnische" Ägypten im 5. Jahrhundert', in *Heiden und Christen im 5. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Jan van Oort and Dietmar Wyrwa (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), pp. 32–65, and Kocku von Stuckrad, '"Christen" und "Nicht-Christen" in der Antike: Von religiös konstruierten Grenzen zur diskursorientierten Religionswissenschaft', in *Hairesis: Festschrift für Karl Hobeisel zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. by Manfred Hutter, Wassilios Klein, and Ulrich Vollmer (Münster: Aschendorff, 2002), pp. 184–202. For the tendency of the previous scholarship to make distinctions between two opposing factions and to define individuals as either Christians or pagans, see Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue*, p. 15.

⁶ For the wide range of cults in the Graeco-Roman world, see, e.g., Hartmut Leppin, 'Zum Wandel des spätantiken Heidentums', *Millennium*, 1 (2004), 59–81 (pp. 62–64); Keith Hopkins, *A World Full of Gods: Pagans, Jews and Christians in the Roman Empire* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson 1999), p. 30; Garth Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth: Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 38; Robert Turcan, 'Les Dieux et le divin dans les mystères de Mithra', in *Knowledge of God in the Graeco-Roman World*, ed. by R. van den Broek, T. Baarda, and J. Mansfeld (Leiden: Brill, 1988), pp. 243–61 (p. 245).

not perceive themselves as pagans nor were they conscious of their paganism.⁷ Nonetheless, Christian writers were inclined to portray the myriad beliefs and practices as a single unified tradition.⁸

The others are often lumped together. This is not only a typical way of coping with complex reality, but also a useful weapon against opponents. For instance, for ecclesiastical writers, lumping opponents together was a helpful rhetorical tool in enhancing their own interpretations of Christianity and condemning all the rivalling religious views at a stroke.

Similarly, in the case of the concepts of 'heretics' and 'heresy', religious rivals were reduced to a single collective term. Those who regarded themselves as 'orthodox' grouped the many other versions of Christianity under the category of 'heresy'.⁹ Or, in the writings of early rabbinic Judaism, the religious others are reduced to the concept of *minim*. It is not specified who these *minim* are, whether they are Christians of Jewish or gentile descent.¹⁰

Naming the Other

Christians developed diverse terms to describe their religious rivals. Christian writers adopted part of the terminology from Jewish tradition. Jewish writers distinguished between Jews who were God's chosen people and non-Jews who were called 'nations' (Hebrew *gôyim*, translated into Greek as *ethne* or *ethnikoi*).¹¹ Christians

⁷ The sarcasm of Henry Chadwick, 'Augustine on Pagans and Christians: Reflections on Religious and Social Change', in *History, Society and the Churches*, ed. by D. Beales and G. Best (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 9–27 (p. 9), gets at the core of the matter: 'The pagans did not know they were pagans until the Christians told them they were.'

⁸ When simplifying their others, Christian writers also simplified Christians themselves, trying to force the wide variety of Christian beliefs and practices into the unified pattern of 'orthodoxy'.

⁹ For the making of heresies, see, e.g., Eduard Iricinschi and Holger M. Zellentin, 'Making Selves and Marking Others: Identity and Late Antique Heresiologies', in *Heresy and Identity in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Eduard Iricinschi and Holger M. Zellentin (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), pp. 1–27.

¹⁰ Lieu, *Christian Identity*, p. 144. Sacha Stern, *Jewish Identity in Early Rabbinic Writings* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), pp. 27–28. Modern scholars (Stern among them) connect the mentions of *minim* in the early Rabbinic writings with the Christianization of the Later Roman Empire.

¹¹ For the terminology, see Martin Hengel, 'Einleitung', in *Die Heiden: Juden, Christen und das Problem des Fremden*, ed. by Reinhard Feldmeier and Ulrich Heckel (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), pp. ix–xviii (pp. xii, xv); Fredouille, 'Heiden', pp. 1116–18; Émilienne Demougeot,

adopted the Greek *ethne* and *ethnikoi* and also used Latin translations *gentiles*, *gentes*, and *nationes*.¹² These terms were in use before and during the fourth century.¹³

Over the course of the fourth century, the word *Hellenes* gradually became the most common term for pagans in Greek.¹⁴ *Hellenes* did not gain popularity in an equivalent Latin translation.¹⁵ Instead, *pagani* became the prevalent term for non-Christians in the Latin west. The term included different associations of rusticity, profanity, ignorance, and being civilian (in contrast to being military).¹⁶ Thus, from the fourth century onwards, the terms used to refer to non-Christians are different in the Greek east and the Latin west. In the west, the term *pagani* branded non-Christians as provincial and even as the outsiders of Roman society while in the east *Hellenes* lacked this label of periphery and barbarity.¹⁷

'Remarques sur l'emploi de *paganus*', in *Studi in onore di Aristide Calderini e Roberto Paribeni*, 1 (Milan: Ceschina, 1956), pp. 337–50 (p. 338).

¹² These terms are by no means neutral but have connotations of foreignness, strangeness, and barbarity. Fredouille, 'Heiden', pp. 1117–20; Demougeot, 'Remarques', pp. 342–43; Ulrich Heckel, 'Das Bild der Heiden und die Identität der Christen bei Paulus', in *Die Heiden*, ed. by Feldmeier and Heckel, pp. 269–96 (p. 270); G. W. Bowersock, *Hellenism in Late Antiquity* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), pp. 10–11.

¹³ *Gentilis* is also used in the sense of barbarian or native, e.g., Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 14. 7. 9, 15. 5. 6. John Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus Marcellinus* (London: Duckworth, 1989), p. 426. Both the senses of the term *gentilis* and the deliberately ambiguous use of *gentilis* are discussed in Kahlos's 'Who Is a Good Roman?' in this collection.

¹⁴ It is difficult to specify when precisely writers began to refer to *Hellenes* in contraposition to Christians. The associations with the Greeks, Greek language, and culture are often implied even in the use of the word *Hellenes* to mean pagans. For the discussion with examples, see Richard Klein, 'Hellenen (Teil A.II-IV.B)', in *RAC*, XIV (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1988), pp. 375–445 (pp. 434–38); Fredouille, 'Heiden', pp. 1118–20; Vinzent, 'Das "heidnische" Ägypten', p. 36; Bowersock, *Hellenism*, pp. 9–10.

¹⁵ The Latin translation *Graeci* was used only occasionally, e.g., Augustinus, *Quaestiones evangeliorum*, 1. 14: 'propter Graecos, id est gentes' (*Sancti Aurelii Augustini Quaestiones evangeliorum cum appendice Questionum XVI in Mattheum*, ed. by Almut Mutzenbecher, Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, 44B (Turnhout: Brepols, 1980)); Augustinus, *De opere monachorum*, 13. 14: 'Graecos, quos etiam paganos dicimus' (*Sancti Aurelii Augustini opera* 5.3, ed. by Joseph Zycha, CSEL, 41).

¹⁶ For the history of the word *paganus* and the scholarly debate on its etymology, see Pierre Chuvin, 'Sur les origines de l'équation *paganus* = païen', in *Impies et païens entre Antiquité et Moyen Âge*, ed. by Lionel Mary and Michel Sot (Paris: Picard, 2002), pp. 7–15; Harold Remus, 'The End of "Paganism"?', *Studies in Religion / Sciences Religieuses*, 33 (2004), 191–208 (pp. 198–201); J. J. O'Donnell, 'Paganus': Evolution and Use', *Classical Folia*, 31 (1977), 163–69 (pp. 163–64).

¹⁷ The divergent terms in Greek and Latin use probably reflect the local differences in the Christianization of the east and west.

Those people who were referred to as pagans would not initially have classified themselves into a single category, paganism.¹⁸ Over the course of the fourth century, however, a distinct pagan self-awareness is seen to emerge as a reaction to the altered circumstances — namely competition and interaction with Christians as well as the Christian construction of paganism. Emperor Julian's vision of Hellenism in the 360s was a symptom of this growing pagan self-understanding.¹⁹ The Antiochene rhetorician Libanius employed the terms *Hellen*, *Hellenikos*, and *Hellenizein* ('to be a Hellene') in the sense of the traditional Greek way of life, which included foremost language, literature, and lifestyle but to a lesser extent also traditional religious customs.²⁰ In the fifth and sixth centuries, there were several Greek writers such as Eunapius of Sardis, Damascius, Proclus, and Marinus who knowingly manifested their own Hellenism as well as the Hellenism of their heroes and communities.²¹

Only otherness is identified through giving it a name. 'We' are represented as the norm, humans, the people, etc., and thus 'we' do not need names. The other is represented as something else deviating from this norm, therefore it requires a name. For instance, according to the Acts of the Apostles (11. 26), the followers of Jesus were described as *Christianoi* for the first time in Antioch.²² Christian

¹⁸ It is noteworthy that what we call the Greek and Roman religious traditions lacked a distinctive name: the Greeks and Romans simply spoke of *threskeia*, *cultus* (worship), *eusebeia*, *pietas* (piety), *nomos* (law), or *religio* (religious observance). For the unselfconsciousness of the traditional religions, see Garth Fowden, 'Varieties of Religious Community', in *Interpreting Late Antiquity*, ed. by G. W. Bowersock, Peter Brown, and Oleg Grabar (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001), pp. 82–106 (p. 83).

¹⁹ For the discussion on the growing self-consciousness of pagans, see Fowden, 'Varieties', pp. 86–87; A. D. Lee, *Pagans and Christians in Late Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 10; Isabella Sandwell, *Religious Identity in Late Antiquity: Greeks, Jews and Christians in Antioch* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 18–19.

²⁰ E.g., Libanius, *Epistula*, 285. 2. A. J. Festugière, *Antioche païenne et chrétienne* (Paris: De Boccard, 1959), pp. 220–22, stresses the religious aspect whereas Sandwell, *Religious Identity*, pp. 176–80, emphasizes the cultural, ethical, and ethnic aspects in Libanius's understanding of Hellenism.

²¹ Polymnia Athanassiadi, 'Persecution and Response in Late Paganism: The Evidence of Damascius', *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 113 (1993), 1–29; Raban von Haehling, 'Damascius und die heidnische Opposition im 5. Jh. n.Chr.', *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, 23 (1980), 82–95; Raban von Haehling, 'Heiden im griechischen Osten des 5. Jhs n.Chr.', *Römische Quartalschrift*, 77 (1982), 52–85.

²² Tim Hegedus, 'Naming Christians in Antiquity', *Studies in Religion / Sciences Religieuses*, 332 (2004), 173–90 (p. 174), argues that the name 'Christians' originated outside the community of

groups identified each other with different names (such as Marcionites, Arians, Nestorians, Donatists) in order to distinguish ‘others’ from ‘us’. These names — often formed after the alleged founder or leader figures — segregated the other from ‘us’ who were regarded as the real Christians.

In the othering discourse of Christian authors, non-Christians were marked and represented as inferior to Christians themselves. Othering is a term used to describe the representation of a person or group of people as fundamentally alien from another group; for instance, in the case of pagans, they were increasingly argued as not belonging to late antique Roman society. This is perceived in the pejorative words with which pagans were characterized, for example, *increduli*, *infideles*, *apistoi*, *apistountes* (unbelievers), *impīi*, *asebeis*, *dyssebeis* (impious), *atheoi* (atheists), *idolorum cultores*, *eidololatres* (idolaters), *hoi ekso*, *hoi ton eksothen* (outsiders), *perfidy* (perfidious), *iniqui* (wicked), *nescii* (ignorant), and *miseri* (miserable). Their religious inclinations were condemned as *eidololatrea*, *idolatria* (idolatry), *superstitio* (superstition), *iniquitas* (wickedness), *insania* (insanity), *error* (error), and *ignorantia* (ignorance).²³ In the following sections I shall discuss the kinds of rhetorical tools that were used to mark pagans as inferior outsiders.

The Image of Pagans and Christian Self-understanding

Christian writers defined and clarified their Christian identity in relation both to Jews (during the first centuries CE) and to pagans (in Late Antiquity). The boundaries of being Christian were fixed through binary oppositions, for instance, by inventing dichotomies between ‘our’ true God and ‘their’ false deities, ‘our’ truth

Jesus’s followers, most probably from among the Greek population of Antioch in need to distinguish Jesus’s adherents from their fellow Jews. Later on, the term became a self-designation for Jesus’s followers themselves. For the discussion on the term Christians, see Lieu, *Christian Identity*, pp. 250–53, and Philippa Townsend, ‘Who Were the First Christians? Jews, Gentiles and the *Christianoi*’, in *Heresy and Identity in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Iricinschi and Zellentin, pp. 212–30.

²³ For othering, see the discussion in the Introduction of this volume. For the derogatory terms in Christian literature, see Ilona Opelt, *Die Polemik in der christlichen lateinischen Literatur von Tertullian bis Augustin* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1980). Similar invective terms were applied to Christians by Greek and Roman writers; see, e.g., Markus Mertaniemi, ‘Values of Hatred: Rhetoric and Image of Christianity Before and During the Great Persecution 303–312 AD’, in *Imagology and Cross-Cultural Encounters in History*, ed. by Kari Alenius, Olavi K. Fält, and Markus Mertaniemi, *Studia Historica Septentrionalia*, 56 (Rovaniemi: Societas historica Finlandiae septentrionalis, 2008), pp. 57–62 (p. 59).

and 'their' falsehood, 'our' divine revelation and 'their' human opinions, 'our' unity and 'their' discord, 'our' order and 'their' chaos. (The most recurrent binary oppositions are listed in the appendix to this article.)²⁴ To put it bluntly, it was the contrast that confirmed Christian uniqueness. Augustine explained the existence of remaining pagans as the contradictors, that is, the testers, of the Christian faith (*ut adhuc habeat fides nostra reprobatores*). John Chrysostom formulated the same idea of being Christian, writing that 'there would be no pagans if we were such Christians as we ought to be'.²⁵

These dichotomies originate from the early empire when Christian groups as minorities in the Roman world outlined their relationship to the surrounding majority.²⁶ The Christian self-image — as any self-image — was constantly redefined in altering circumstances²⁷ and particularly after the Constantinian turn when there was a significant change in power relations between Christians and non-Christians.

II

In this part of my survey I shall analyse different elements in the depictions of pagans, proceeding from intellectual disqualification to moral disqualification and finally the most relentless facets of the image: equating pagans with disease, beasts, and the ultimate evil.²⁸

²⁴ Binary oppositions in Christian discourse are discussed more thoroughly in Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue*, pp. 11–54.

²⁵ Augustinus, *Sermo*, 24. 4, in Augustin d'Hippone, *Vingt-six sermons au peuple d'Afrique*, ed. by François Dolbeau (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1996). S. A. H. Kennell, 'Vi adhuc habeat fides nostra reprobatores: Augustine's Hostile Hearers', in *Augustin le prédicateur (395–411)*, ed. by Goulven Madec (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1998), pp. 343–52 (p. 345), writes that 'those without faith in Christ are understood to act as proofs of that very faith'. Johannes Chrysostomus, *Homilia 10 in I Timotheum*, 3 (trans. by Kennell).

²⁶ The construction of Christian identity during the first three centuries is meticulously analysed in Lieu, *Christian Identity*.

²⁷ For the continuous change, reinforcement, and conceptual frontiers, see R. A. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 34, and Richard Rothaus, 'Christianization and De-Paganization: The Late Antique Creation of a Conceptual Frontier', in *Shifting Frontiers in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Ralph W. Mathisen and Hagith S. Sivan (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996), pp. 299–307.

²⁸ Cf. Ofer Zur, 'The Love of Hating: The Psychology of Enmity', *History of European Ideas*, 13 (1991), 345–69 (p. 363), who lists seven levels in the dehumanization of the enemy: full human

Stupidity and Madness

In Christian literature the most frequent designations for pagans were *vani*, *vanissimi*, *inanes*, and *inanissimi* (vain and empty). Christian authors also depicted pagans as stupid (*stulti*), ignorant (*nescii*), and miserable (*miseri*). Augustine of Hippo, for instance, frequently refers to his pagan opponents as *stulti* and *miseri*.²⁹ In the imperial proclamation of 425, paganism is characterized as foolish (*stolidus*).³⁰ This mockery for the most part derives from second-, third-, and early fourth-century apologetic and polemical writing.³¹ Christian apologists used a recurrent image of non-Christians who were as stupid and empty as the stuff from which their idols were made. This line of thought is seen in Lactantius's statement that pagans are stupid like the stones and logs (*lapides et stipites*) when worshipping idols.³² Similarly, in *Carmen paschale*, the fifth-century poet Sedulius associates pagans with the wooden blocks that they worship and calls them blockheads.³³

Pagans were also connected with madness.³⁴ Sedulius writes of their blinded minds (*caecatis mentibus*) and insanity (*dementia*).³⁵ The anonymous *Carmen contra paganos* portrays a pagan senator as puffed up with rage (*rabies animi*) and madness of mind (*insania mentis*). Furthermore, the term *pagani* had negative connotations

being, faceless enemy, humanoid (including images of the devil), animal, feminized enemy, inanimate object, and abstraction or numbers.

²⁹ Augustinus, *De consensu evangelistarum*, 1. 26. 40, 1. 21. 29: 'miseri'; *Sermo* 141. 3; *De civitate Dei*, 4. 2: 'stulti'.

³⁰ *Codex Theodosianus*, 15. 5. 5 (in 425): 'stolidae paganitatis errore adque insania'.

³¹ Pagans are called stupid and ignorant, e.g., by Tertullian (*Ad nationes*, 1. 9. 10: 'stultissimus'), Arnobius (*Adversus nationes*, 1. 53: 'nescii', 'mentes incredulae'; 2. 5: 'nescii', 'etiam fletu et miseratione dignissimi'), and Lactantius (*Epitome divinarum institutionum*, 52. 10: 'stulti homunculi'; *Divinae institutiones*, 2. 6. 11: 'stulti'). Opelt, *Die Polemik*, pp. 74, 243–44, shows that Christian writers use the same phraseology as is found in the slanders in Roman comedies.

³² Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones*, 1. 20. 42.

³³ Sedulius, *Carmen paschale*, 1. 268: 'Lignee, ligna rogas, surdis clamare videris.'

³⁴ Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones*, 1. 21. 4: 'dementissimi homines'. Augustinus, *De consensu evangelistarum*, 1. 32. 50, 1. 9. 14: 'isti desipiunt'; Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, 6. 6: 'tam inmanem sacrilegamque dementia', 'ad tantum praecipitium furiosissimae impietatis insanit'; *Carmen contra paganos*, 30, 78.

³⁵ Sedulius, *Carmen paschale*, 1. 245: 'quae tanta animos dementia ludit'; 1. 248: 'Ast alii solem caecatis mentibus acti'.

of uncouthness and provinciality: pagans were country hicks.³⁶ In the decree of 438 Emperor Theodosius II refers to the pagans' 'natural rage' (*naturali vesania*).³⁷

For their part, Greek and Roman writers mocked Christians as being foolish and ignorant.³⁸ The beliefs and views of opponents were represented as absurd and preposterous. The opposing beliefs and views were often reduced to a straw man. The intellectual and moral disqualification of a rival was commonplace in the endless controversies between religious groups and philosophical schools. L. T. Johnson speaks of a stereotyped polemic and conventional expression that developed in these disputes. The purpose of the polemic was not the refutation of the adversary as such but rather the edification of one's own group.³⁹

Blindness

The spiritual blindness of pagans is a recurring theme in Christian apologetic writing and part of the intellectual disqualification of the other.⁴⁰ Pagans are blind because they have not seen the light of Christianity. For instance, the anonymous fifth-century writer of *Consultationes Apollonii et Zacchaei* speaks of the spiritual blindness of pagans: if the blind do not discern the splendour of the light, at least

³⁶ See the discussion above (p. 170). As O'Donnell, 'Paganus', pp. 166–68, argues, the connotation with country hicks was an effective means of embarrassing cultivated Roman pagan senators.

³⁷ *Novellae ad Theodosianum pertinentes*, 3. 8.

³⁸ In the early fourth century Lactantius (*Divinae institutiones*, 2. 31, 5. 32; *Epitome divinarum institutionum*, 52. 9) reports that Christians were mocked as stupid. Even in the late fourth and early fifth centuries, Christian writers such as Augustine, Jerome, and the so-called Ambrosiaster inform us that Christians were labelled as *stulti*. Augustinus, *Epistula*, 102. 30–31; Augustinus, *De divinatione daemonum*, 10. 14: 'Inrideant ergo, quantum possunt, tamquam inperitiam et stultitiam nostram et iacent doctrinam et sapientiam suam'; Augustinus, *Tractatus in Johannis evangelium*, 100. 3. 16: 'Christianos quippe velut imperitos vituperant'; Augustinus, *In psalmos enarrationes*, 34. 2. 8: 'Ubi cumque invenerint Christianum, solent insultare, exagitare, irridere, vocare hebetem, insulsum, nullius cordis, nullius peritiae'; Hieronymus, *Epistula*, 77. 9; Pseudo-Augustinus, *Quaestiones veteris et novi testamenti*, 114. For the intellectual disqualification of Christians, see Pierre Courcelle, 'Propos antichrétiens rapportés par S. Augustin', *Recherches Augustiniennes*, 1 (1958), 149–86 (p. 151).

³⁹ L. T. Johnson, 'The New Testament's Anti-Jewish Slander and the Conventions of Ancient Polemic', *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 108 (1989), 419–41 (pp. 430, 433).

⁴⁰ For pagan blindness in the second- and third-century apologetic, see, e.g., Tertullianus, *Ad nationes*, 1. 4. 9; Cyprianus, *Ad Demetrianum*, 1. Other examples are given in Opelt, *Die Polemik*, pp. 111, 119, 177–79.

they feel its warmth.⁴¹ In his debate with pagan philosophers Lactantius condemned them as unlearned, impious as well as blind, foolish, and senseless.⁴²

Blindness was also one of the main characteristics in the condemnation of opponents in the debates between Christians and Jews as well as between rivalling Christian sects. The blindness of the Pharisees belongs to the rhetoric of slander in the gospel of Matthew (23. 16).⁴³ The blindness of the Arians recurs in the polemic against heresies.⁴⁴

In addition to blindness, pagans are labelled as lacking other senses. Just as their idols are senseless, blind, deaf, and lifeless, so are pagans themselves. In his allegorical interpretation of the wine miracle in Cana, Gaudentius of Brescia writes that the six human abilities (sight, hearing, smelling, speaking, the movement of hands, and the walking of feet) were lifeless as long as people were pagans: 'they were stony and dead in us' (*lapidea erant in nobis et mortua*). This inertia is connected with the dead material and insensibility of idols. Now that people had become Christians, they and their senses were vivified by baptism.⁴⁵

Pagans Are Like Children

Pagans were compared to both children and women, and both characterizations were meant to weaken the intellectual credibility of the opponent.⁴⁶ Eusebius of Caesarea writes that the pagan multitude was inspired by 'the infantile fear of the bugbears of error'; Eusebius refers to the awe of human-made idols of gold and silver.⁴⁷

⁴¹ *Consultationes Zacchaei et Apollonii*, 1. praef. 5: 'caecis oculis lumen'. Other examples: Augustinus, *De consensu evangelistarum*, 1. 10. 15; Pseudo-Paulinus, *Poema ultimum*, 94; Prudentius, *Peristephanon martyrorum*, 10. 731.

⁴² Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones*, 2. 5. These pagan philosophers surpassed in frivolity the ignorance of the uneducated.

⁴³ For the attacks against Jews in the New Testament writings, see, e.g., Johnson, 'The New Testament's Anti-Jewish Slander', pp. 419–41.

⁴⁴ For example, *Consultationes Zacchaei et Apollonii*, 2. 16. 12: 'Arriani caecam persuasionem'. For other examples, see Opelt, *Die Polemik*, pp. 111, 119.

⁴⁵ Gaudentius, *Tractatus*, 9. 28–31.

⁴⁶ In earlier apologetic: Tatianus, *Oratio ad Graecos*, 30, of his pagan inclination as the foolishness of childhood; pagans are like children: Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica*, 1. 6. 1–3; Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones*, 4.

⁴⁷ Eusebius, *In laudem Constantini*, 8. Similarly, Arnobius (*Adversus nationes*, 6. 26) compares pagans to little boys who are afraid of masks, grimaces, and bogeymen.

Furthermore, John Chrysostom equates pagans and children, stating that they are content to spend their lives playing on the floor. When a grown-up attempts to talk to them about serious issues, they just laugh.⁴⁸ Similarly, Augustine depicts pagans as children who play in the mud. Because they are not able to look after themselves, adults must take care of them — this is obviously an allusion to the emperor with his anti-pagan legislation.⁴⁹

Drawing parallels with children can even be used to justify religious coercion. If people are not capable of taking care of their spiritual health, it is the responsibility of the Church and the imperial government to look after them as if they were minors under guardianship.

Feminization

Vilifying and marginalizing opponents by associating them with women has a long tradition in Graeco-Roman antiquity. Greek and Roman writers branded Christian groups as both dominated and led by women.⁵⁰ Feminization, for instance, in the debates between competing Christian sects, was meant to undermine the religious authority of the rival. In political disputes, the opponent was labelled to be under the influence of his womenfolk at home and, consequently, it was implied that he could no longer be taken seriously in the public political sphere.⁵¹

The Roman elite, Cicero among others, traditionally branded unaccepted or despised beliefs and customs as the superstitions of old women (*superstitiones aniles*).⁵² Following this tradition, the fourth-century historian Ammianus Marcellinus criticized Emperor Constantius II for inciting theological disputes and thus confounding the plain and simple Christian religion into old wives' superstition

⁴⁸ Johannes Chrysostomus, *Homilia in epistolam I ad Corinthos*, 4. 6 (PG, 61, cols 38–40), as an echo of Plato, *Timaeus*, 22. For this passage, see John H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Antioch, City and Imperial Administration in the Later Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), p. 232.

⁴⁹ Augustine, *Sermo*, 62. 18.

⁵⁰ See Mertaniemi's article 'From *Superstitio* to *Religio Christiana*' in this collection.

⁵¹ Kate Cooper, 'Insinuations of Womanly Influence: An Aspect of the Christianization of the Roman Aristocracy', *JRS*, 82 (1992), 150–64.

⁵² Cicero, *De natura deorum*, 2. 28. 70: 'superstitiones paene aniles'; cf. 2. 20, 3. 92; *Pro domo sua*, 105; *De divinatione*, 1. 7, 2. 19, 2. 125, 2. 60. In Minucius Felix's *Octavius* (13. 5) the fictive Roman Caecilius defends Roman religion and condemns other religious inclinations as 'the superstition of old women'. Christianity was labelled as an impious and female superstition: in Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones*, 5. 2: 'cohibita impia et anili superstitione'; 1. 17 quoting Cicero.

(*anilis superstitio*).⁵³ Christian writers for their part overturned the hierarchy and ridiculed pagan beliefs and opinions by feminizing them. Firmicus Maternus turned the insult over and labelled pagan cults as old wives' tales or superstitions.⁵⁴ Paulinus of Nola labels Platonic views as the comic prattling of old wives.⁵⁵

Immorality

The moral and cultic integrity of pagans was undermined by using terms such as impious, unjust, immoral, perfidious, profane, blasphemous (*impij, iniusti, nefandi, perfidi, profani, blasphemij*).⁵⁶ The abundant denigration of pagans and their cult practices in the fourth- and fifth-century Christian literature essentially followed the conventions of the second- and third-century apologists.⁵⁷ Polytheistic cultic practices were depicted as orgies filled with immoralities, promiscuity, magic, and blood baths. The theatrical performances connected to the cult of Flora, the phallus cult in honour of Priapus, and the Bacchic rites were among the most frequently slandered practices.⁵⁸ The cult of Magna Mater, for example, was the regular object of Christian slander and the *galli* priests of Magna Mater were recurrently decried as perverted.⁵⁹ Pagans are depicted as sexually corrupt.⁶⁰

⁵³ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 21. 16. 18.

⁵⁴ Firmicus Maternus, *De erroribus profanarum religionum*, 17. 4 referring to Cicero.

⁵⁵ Paulinus Nolanus, *Epistula*, 16. 4: 'ridiculam anilis fabulae cantilenam'; cf. *Epistula*, 1. 9: 'aniles quaestiones'.

⁵⁶ E.g., Gaudentius of Brescia (*Praefatio Gaudentii episcopi ad Benicolum magistrum memoriae*, 28) calls pagans *iniustos, idolatras, blasphemos*. Opelt, *Die Polemik*, pp. 226, 237–40.

⁵⁷ For example, Tertullian (*Apologeticum*, 35. 2) called the door of a pagan shrine the face of the new brothel ('*facies novi lupanaris*') and Clement of Alexandria (*Protrepticus*, 2) disparaged the mysteries connected with Aphrodite as shameful and preposterous.

⁵⁸ Flora: Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, 2. 27; *Carmen contra paganos*, 112: 'meretrix [...] Flora'. Priapus: Prudentius, *Contra Symmachum*, 1. 102–15; Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, 7. 24. Bacchus: Augustinus, *Epistula*, 17. 4. For further examples, see Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue*, pp. 114–19.

⁵⁹ For example, Augustinus, *De civitate Dei*, 2. 4, 7. 26, 6. 8; Pseudo-Paulinus, *Poema ultimum*, 88; Prudentius, *Peristephanon martyrorum*, 10. 1068. See also Rauhalä's article 'Devotion and Deviance' in this collection.

⁶⁰ Athanasius of Alexandria (*Contra gentes*, 29. 47–48; also 26. 8–19; 29. 37–40) refers to the sexual corruption of pagans, and the ruling of Theodosius II in 438 speaks of the pagans' stubborn insolence (*Novellae ad Theodosianum pertinentes*, 3. 8: 'licentia pertinaci').

Moral disqualification was part of the rhetoric of condemnation between rivalling groups. In philosophical disputes, the rivalling schools were not only refuted with philosophical arguments, but also denigrated as morally inferior. In particular, Epicureans were constantly disparaged.⁶¹ Greek and Roman writers defamed Christian groups as practitioners of magic, incest, promiscuity, ritual murders, and cannibalism.⁶² Similarly, Christian heresiologists depicted the rivalling Christian groups in the same vein as pagan practices: heretics dwell in magic, orgies, and promiscuity.⁶³

The most relentless aspect of the image of immoral pagan practices was the reference to human sacrifices: pagans were alleged to have offered humans as sacrifices to their gods. Most of the examples came from the Greek and Roman past, but Christian writers implied that pagan contemporaries continued to perform human sacrifices.⁶⁴ When reporting on the destruction of the Marneion by Christian monks in Gaza in the early fifth century, Marcus Diaconus claims that pagans had performed human sacrifices at the temple.⁶⁵ Both in the depictions of foreign peoples and in the polemic between rival religious groups, the writers used human sacrifice as a marker of barbarity; the group to which such rituals were attributed was implied to exceed all proper bounds of civilization.⁶⁶

⁶¹ The attacks against the Epicureans are discussed in Arnd Rehn, 'Vomunt ut edant, edunt ut vomant: Beobachtungen zur Epikurpolemik in der römischen Literatur', in *Die Heiden*, ed. by Feldmeier and Heckel, pp. 381–99.

⁶² The defamation of Christians: Minucius Felix, *Octavius*, 8–9, 12. 7, 16. 5; Justinus Martyr, *Dialogus cum Tryphone*, 10, 1. *apologia*, 29; Tertullianus, *Apologeticum*, 2. 4 (*homicidae, sacrilegi, incesti, and publici hostes*), 2. 16, 7. 1, 8. 2; *Adversus nationes* 1. 2. 8, 1. 9. 2 ('cladis publicae vel iniuriae causas'), 4. 2.

⁶³ The mutual attacks between Christian groups: Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromateis*, 3. 2. 10; Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 4. 7. 10; Justinus Martyr, 1. *apologia*, 26; Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, 1. 6. 3–4, 1. 13. 3.

⁶⁴ Human sacrifices in the past: Athanasius, *Contra gentes*, 25; Prudentius, *Contra Symmachum*, 1. 395–96, 2. 296–97; Orosius, *Historia adversus paganos*, 1. 11. 2, 4. 6. 3–4, 4. 13. 3; cf. Arnobius, *Adversus nationes*, 2. 68; and Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones*, 1. 21.

⁶⁵ Marcus Diaconus, *Vita Porphyrii*, 66. Similar allusions to human sacrifices were made during the destruction of Serapeum in 391 (Rufinus, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 2. 24); see Françoise Thelamon, 'Destruction du paganisme et construction du royaume de Dieu d'après Rufin et Augustin', *Cristianesimo nella storia*, 11 (1990), 523–44 (p. 531). Furthermore, it was rumoured that during the reign of Emperor Julian, pagan sorcerers killed infants in order to examine their entrails for divination: Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 3. 13. 11–12; cf. Johannes Chrysostomus, *Homilia 28 in Matthaeum*, 3.

⁶⁶ James B. Rives, 'Human Sacrifice among Pagans and Christians', *JRS*, 85 (1995), 65–85 (p. 69).

In Christian literature, for instance, in Prudentius's *Psychomachia*, the vices are characterized as representing the pagan Roman world whereas the virtues are depicted as Christian.⁶⁷ For Caesarius of Arles, drunkenness and other vices are emphatically pagan.⁶⁸ Gaudentius of Brescia lumps idolatrous practices together with crimes and vices such as adultery, debauchery, and murder.⁶⁹

Beasts

The equating of pagans with animals was connected to the images of pagan stupidity and immorality, implying that pagans were as irrational as beasts and without morals. This is apparent, for example, in Lactantius's comparison of his pagan opponents to dumb animals.⁷⁰ Maximus of Turin compares pagans to an ass that, with its eyes shut, walks in the circle of its own error round the millstone of ignorance.⁷¹

Moreover, drawing parallels with animals removed pagans to beyond the bounds of humanity. (This could also be done even without a direct reference to animals as Augustine does when arguing that pagans are separated from humankind.)⁷² Paganism was connected with the wildness of nature while Christianity represented the human sphere. Pagans who were converted to Christianity were at the same time tamed into humanity. Paulinus of Nola praises his fellow bishop Nicetas of Remesiana for converting pagans: their morals (*mos*) had been those of

⁶⁷ Among the personified vices there is *Cultura veterum deorum*, the Cult of the Old Gods. The vices *Avaritia* (Greed), *Luxuria* (Indulgence), and *Superbia* (Pride) have distinct Roman features which are 'construed as the other of Christianitas' (Marie Verdoner, 'Cultural Negotiations in the Psychomachia of Prudentius', in *Beyond Reception: Mutual Influences between Antique Religion, Judaism, and Early Christianity*, ed. by David Brakke, Anders-Christian Jacobsen, and Jörg Ulrich (Frankfurt: Lang, 2006), pp. 227–43 (p. 236). In *Contra Symmachum* Prudentius is seen to create a new Christian *Romanitas* in place of the old pagan *Romanitas* (see Kahlos's article 'Who Is a Good Roman?' in this collection).

⁶⁸ Caesarius Arelatensis, *Sermones*, 192–93, *de Kalendis Ianuariis*; see also *Sermo*, 233.

⁶⁹ Gaudentius, *Tractatus*, 13. 28.

⁷⁰ Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones*, 1. 8. 3: 'non multum a mutis animalibus differentes'; also *Epitome divinarum institutionum*, 52. 9: 'pecudibus aequales'.

⁷¹ Maximus Taurinensis, *Sermo*, 48. 4: 'qui clausis oculis circa ignorantiae molam erroris sui gyro pertrahitur'. The ass was a symbol for pagans in Christian literature: Ilona Opelt, 'Esel', in *RAC*, VI (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1966), pp. 564–95 (pp. 577–78).

⁷² Augustinus, *Sermo*, 26. 8, ed. by Dolbeau: 'iam separati a genere humano'.

beasts and now their rites (*ritus*) were those of angels.⁷³ Thus, the Christian leaders seem to have adopted the providential role of Roman conquerors to tame and civilize the world.

Wild nature appears in Gaudentius's interpretation of the Song of Songs (4. 8). Gaudentius explains the wilderness — the dens of lions and the mountains of leopards ('a cubilibus leonum, a montibus leopardorum') — as paganism. People are called to leave the forests of horrifying idolatry and the food of terrible beasts as well as to abandon the nests of demons in order to hasten to the cult of the omnipotent God.⁷⁴

In their depictions of pagans, Christian writers made ample use of the ancient repertoire of venomous animals such as scorpions or snakes.⁷⁵ In the anonymous *Carmen contra paganos* the pagan senator under attack is slandered as a pale snake (*luridus anguis*).⁷⁶ The animal analogy is one of the most primeval ways of describing the other. According to the oft-quoted report by Rodney Needham, people tend to call themselves humans and their neighbouring tribes monkeys, crocodiles, or malignant spirits.⁷⁷ Christian heretics were frequently associated with savage animals, especially wolves and snakes. Celestine of Rome calls Nestorius a wolf, and

⁷³ Paulinus Nolanus, *Carmen*, 17. 225–28: 'mos ubi quondam fuerat ferarum | nunc ibi ritus viget angelorum | et latet iustus quibus ipse latro | vixit in antris'. Paulinus probably implies both pagan and barbarian morality since Christian writers often connect these two: see Kahlos's article 'Who Is a Good Roman?' in this collection. For the taming of pagans, see Vinzenz Buchheit, 'Einheit durch Religion in Antike und Christentum', in *Chartulae: Festschrift für Wolfgang Speyer* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1998), pp. 36–43 (p. 42).

⁷⁴ Gaudentius, *Tractatus*, 8. 32: "Veni a Libano, sponsa, veni a Libano; venies et transibis ab initio fidei, a capite Sanhir et ab Hermon, a cubilibus leonum, a montibus leopardorum" — scilicet ut horrentis idolatriae silvas deserens et stabula immanium ferarum, daemonum quippe cubilia derelinquens, ad omnipotentis dei cultum properet eiusque amplectatur fidem, qui eam divini amoris gratia sponsam vocare dignatur.'

⁷⁵ For snakes in polemic, see Opelt, *Die Polemik*, p. 214.

⁷⁶ *Carmen contra paganos*, 53.

⁷⁷ Rodney Needham, *Primordial Characters* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1978), p. 5. William Scott Green, 'Otherness Within: Towards a Theory of Difference in Rabbinic Judaism', in *To see ourselves as others see us: Christians, Jews, 'Others' in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Jacob Neusner and Ernest S. Frerichs (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985), pp. 49–69 (p. 50), states that the proposition implies that 'we' have been crocodiles in the past or might become crocodiles. See also Jonathan Z. Smith, 'Differential Equations on Constructing the Other', in Smith, *Relating Religion: Essays in the Study of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), pp. 230–50 (p. 232), and Klostergaard Petersen's article 'Othering in Paul' in this collection.

Palladius depicts John Chrysostom's enemies as savage lions.⁷⁸ In his heresiological work *Panarion*, Epiphanius of Salamis offers a catalogue of eighty different species of snake, that is, heresies. In early Rabbinic writings, non-Jews were sometimes compared to animals in general or, more specifically, to dogs, bears, or donkeys.⁷⁹

Dirt, Disease, and Infection

Paganism was associated with dirt, for instance, by Prudentius in *Contra Symmachum*: the poet aims at discomfiting the renowned polytheistic orator Symmachus — or his polytheistic admirers — by comparing the eloquent Symmachus with a man who works the filthy soil (*caenosum solum*) with rakes of ivory or tills the muddy quagmires (*limoque madentes [...] ulvas*) with golden forks. The divinities of pagans were *sordida monstra*, filthy monstrosities.⁸⁰ A Syrian writer, Jacob of Serugh (451–521), condemns public shows with mimes and dancing as paganism with the characterization of mud, loathsome pus, and boils.⁸¹

Paganism was branded as a severe contagious disease. For instance, in the proclamation of Emperor Theodosius II of 438, pagans — among other religious dissidents, heretics, and Jews — are called a hopeless disease (*desperatus morbus*).⁸² For the anonymous writer of *Poema ultimum*, the priests of Magna Mater are infections (*contagia*).⁸³

The label of contagion and disease connotes pagans with harm and destruction from which the community should be protected. It was also declared both in the imperial legislation and in the writings of church fathers that the spread of the pagan infection called for extreme measures. Firmicus Maternus and Augustine of Hippo are the most notorious examples of those Christian writers who argued for

⁷⁸ *Epistula Caelestini ad Johannem Antiochenum* (= *Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum*, ed. by Eduard Schwarz and others (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1914–) [hereafter *ACO*], 1.1.1, p. 90). Palladius, *Dialogus de Johannis Chrysostomi*, 8, lines 229–30 (Palladius, *Dialogue sur la vie de Jean Chrysostome*, ed. by Anne-Marie Malingrey, Sources Chrétiennes, 341 (Paris: Cerf, 1988), pp. 176–77).

⁷⁹ Stern, *Jewish Identity*, pp. 35–39, with a list of references to early Rabbinic literature.

⁸⁰ Prudentius, *Contra Symmachum*, 1. 636–40 with other dirt metaphors.

⁸¹ Jacobus Sarugensis, *Homilia*, 5; for the text, see Lee, *Pagans and Christians*, pp. 143–44.

⁸² *Novellae ad Theodosianum pertinentes*, 3. 2 (in 438): 'desperatis morbis nulla sit adhibenda curatio'. Paganism as a disease is stressed by Theodoret of Cyrrhus in his *Healing of Hellenic Diseases* (e.g. 1. 1–8, 1. 127–28) and Augustine in *City of God*.

⁸³ Pseudo-Paulinus, *Poema ultimum*, 89.

religious coercion with medical analogies. Just as the infected parts of a sick body are cut away by the physician, so are human souls cured from their illness. The coercive measures of the imperial government are the tool of the healing God.⁸⁴

The metaphors of infection and illness have a long history in Graeco-Roman literature. The unaccepted or despised religious inclinations were often branded as illnesses. Horace, for instance, labels superstition as the malady of the mind (*morbus mentis*).⁸⁵ Christianity was denounced as a noxious illness. In the proclamation of Emperor Maximinus Daia, Christianity was called a severe disease from which people had been saved.⁸⁶ Christian writers refer to other Christian sects ('heresies') as illness (*pestis, contagio, nosema, nosos*). Cyril of Alexandria attacks his opponent Nestorius whose sickness may spread in the souls of people and therefore must be stopped.⁸⁷ Celestine, the bishop of Rome, writes of Nestorius as a pestilential disease (*loimodes nosos*).⁸⁸

Contamination

The image of pagans as the sickness threatening the empire is connected with the primeval conceptions of pollution. Pagan cults were thought to contaminate the entire community around them. Gaudentius of Brescia and Maximus of Turin speak of the polluting influence of idolatry. Maximus states that the sacrifices made

⁸⁴ Firmicus Maternus, *De erroribus profanarum religionum*, 16. 4–5; Augustinus, *Tractatus in Johannis evangelium*, 7. 12; *Epistula*, 185. 7. 26. For the use of medical analogy in justifying coercion, see Majastina Kahlos, *Forbearance and Compulsion: The Rhetoric of Religious Tolerance and Intolerance in Late Antiquity* (London: Duckworth, 2009), pp. 70–71.

⁸⁵ For example, Horatius, *Saturae*, 2. 3. 79–80.

⁸⁶ Maximinus's edict in Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 9. 7. 11; the fragmentary Latin text is in Stephen Mitchell, 'Maximinus and the Christians in A.D. 312: A New Latin Inscription', *JRS*, 78 (1988), 105–24 (p. 108). The pagan opponent in the fictive dispute in Macarius Magnes's *Apocriticus* (3. 15 = fragm. 69 in Porphyrius, 'Gegen die Christen', ed. by Adolf von Harnack, *Abhandlungen der königlich preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-historische Klasse* (Berlin: Königlich Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1916)) speaks of the malady of Christianity that has spread throughout the towns and countryside.

⁸⁷ For example, the sickness may take root in the souls: Cyrillus Alexandrinus, *Epistula*, 11. 4 (= *ACO*, 1.1.5, p. 11). Cyril (*Homilia IV* = *ACO*, 1.1.2, p. 103) also parallels Nestorius's doctrine with 'Arius's bitter disease'.

⁸⁸ Celestine's letter in Cyrillus Alexandrinus, *Epistula*, 12. 1, 12. 6, 12. 3 (= *ACO*, 1.1.1, pp. 75, 76).

by a tenant contaminate a landowner as well. He writes that pagan religion pollutes those who practise it, and it pollutes those who live nearby, and it pollutes those who see it.⁸⁹ Another example is a North African Christian, Publicola, whom Augustine of Hippo advises in his letter. Publicola is afraid of becoming polluted by food or drink that has been sacrificed to pagan gods.⁹⁰

In the fifth century, ideas of pagans' contaminating influence found their way even to the imperial proclamations in which pagans were served as the scapegoats for the misfortunes of the empire.⁹¹ In the (in)famous ruling of 438, Theodosius II complained that the fight against the monstrosity of pagans (*paganorum et gentilis immanitas*) had not been successful. The Emperor declared that the abnormalities in nature were the result of pagans' bitter perfidy (*paganorum exacerbata perfidia*). Spring was not as exquisite as usual and summer provided only meagre crops; winter was exceptionally harsh and damaged the harvest. Thus nature punished people for the impiety of pagans in its own manner.⁹²

⁸⁹ Gaudentius, *Tractatus*, 9. 2: 'idolatriae contagio'. Maximus Taurinensis, *Sermo*, 105. 2, 106. 1–2, 107. 2: 'Grande igitur est idolatria: polluit exercentes polluit habitantes polluit intuentes; penetrat ad ministros penetrat ad conscios penetrat ad tacentes.' Andreas Merkt, *Maximus I. von Turin: Die Verkündigung eines Bischofs der frühen Reichskirche im zeitgeschichtlichen, gesellschaftlichen und liturgischen Kontext* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 111, 139, 198, and Maijastina Kahlos, 'Polluted by Sacrifices: Christian Repugnance at Sacrificial Rituals in Late Antiquity', in *Ancient and Medieval Religion in Practice, Passages from Antiquity to Middle Ages*, IV, ed. by Sari Katajala-Peltomaa and Ville Vuolanto (Rome: Acta Instituti Romani Finlandiae, forthcoming).

⁹⁰ Publicola's letter in Augustinus, *Epistula*, 46. 6–18; Augustine's reply in Augustinus, *Epistula*, 47. 3–4. Claude Lepelley, 'La Diabolisation du paganisme et ses conséquences psychologiques: les angoisses de Publicola, correspondant de saint Augustin', in *Impies et païens entre Antiquité et Moyen Âge*, ed. by Mary and Sot, pp. 81–96 (pp. 88–89).

⁹¹ Accusations of causing the misfortunes of the empire went back and forth: polytheistic writers blamed Christians for the miseries because the cult of the gods was being neglected: e.g. Symmachus, *Relatio*, 3. 16–17. Augustine of Hippo refuted some of these accusations in his *City of God*.

⁹² *Novellae ad Theodosianum pertinentes*, 3. 8 (in 438): 'An diutius perferemus, mutari temporum vices irata caeli temperie, quae paganorum exacerbata perfidia nescit naturae libramenta servare? Unde enim ver solitam gratiam abiuravit? unde aestas messe ieiuna laboriosum agricolam in spe destituit aristarum? unde hiemis intemperata ferocitas ubertatem terrarum penetrabili frigore sterilitatis laesione damnavit? nisi quod ad impietatis vindictam transit legis suae natura decretum.' In the same ruling, Theodosius II stresses the nefarious and perilous nature of pagan rites and superstition: 'nefarios sacrificiorum ritus et funestae superstitionis errores'. For this decree, see, e.g., Karl Leo Noethlichs, 'Kaisertum und Heidentum im 5. Jahrhundert', in *Heiden und Christen im 5. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Jan van Oort and Dietmar Wyrwa (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), pp. 1–31 (p. 17);

In both Graeco-Roman and Christian traditions, religious deviations in general were believed to pollute the whole community and draw divine wrath upon it. Roman writers usually worry about incorrect cultic *behaviour* whereas Christian authors are concerned with incorrect *doctrine*. Christian mainstream writers claimed that heretics defiled the Church and the empire. Cyril of Alexandria, for instance, uses the image of leaven (*zyme*) of a strange and alien heresy that his ecclesiastical opponent Nestorius has cast among the people, outraging the entire Church.⁹³ An imperial ruling from 425 refers to the contaminating influence of incorrect religion, declaring that genuinely religious people may not be harmed by superstitions and, therefore, all sects inimical to the catholic faith must be expelled from towns in order to prevent people becoming polluted by the presence of these abominable sects.⁹⁴

The Worshipers of Demons

Pagans were not only dehumanized, but also demonized — relegated to the evil side on the dichotomous axis of good and evil. This most extreme way of othering religious rivals had significant consequences for the late antique world view and even afterwards.⁹⁵ The extermination of rivals, whether religious, social, or ethnic, could be justified by the annihilation of the ultimate evil.

The deities worshipped by pagans were branded as demons (*daemones*, *daimones*, *spiritus immundi*, *angeli maligni*, etc.), and consequently, the worshippers themselves were connected with the ultimate evil. Eusebius of Caesarea speaks of the demons that enslave humankind with the snares of polytheism and compares

Fergus Millar, *A Greek Roman Empire: Power and Belief under Theodosius II, 408–450* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), p. 121; Jean Gaudemet, 'La Législation anti-païenne de Constantin à Justinien', *Cristianesimo nella storia*, 11 (1990), 449–68 (p. 466).

⁹³ Cyrillus Alexandrinus, *Epistula*, 17. 1 *ad Nestorium* (= *ACO*, I.1, p. 33).

⁹⁴ *Constitutiones Sirmondianae*, 6 (in 425): 'Sane quia religiosos populos nullis decet superstitionibus depravari, Manichaeos omnesque haereticos vel schismaticos sive mathematicos omnemque sectam catholicis inimicam ab ipso aspectu urbium diversarum exterminari debere praecipimus, ut nec praesentiae quidem criminorum contagione foedentur.'

⁹⁵ For the discussion of the ubiquity of demons and the darkened late antique world, see A. H. Armstrong, 'Dualism: Platonic, Gnostic, and Christian', in *Neoplatonism and Gnosticism*, ed. by Richard T. Wallis and Jay Bregman (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), pp. 33–54 (p. 50), and J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Continuity and Change in Roman Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), p. 269.

demons with barbarians: demons as the inner enemy are far more dangerous than the barbarians, the outer enemy of the Roman Empire.⁹⁶ Gaudentius of Brescia states that Satan himself is worshipped in the form of handmade idols (*per simulacra colerent manu facta*). An anonymous *Poema ultimum* maintains that Vestals venerate the devil.⁹⁷ Pagans (as well as Jews and heretics) were frequently called the children of the devil and the children of demons.⁹⁸ The worshippers became similar to the demons they adored. Caesarius of Arles declares that even a person who believes in the Christian God but nonetheless does not follow the demands of Christianity is akin to demons.⁹⁹

The devilry of paganism was reinforced with the metaphors of darkness. Pagans were the children of darkness.¹⁰⁰ Caesarius of Arles disparaged his listeners who — despite their baptism — had visited the shrines of pagans and refused to destroy those shrines, even rioting against those who tried to demolish them. These miserable people abandoned the light and ran into the darkness; they despised God and embraced the devil.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ Eusebius, *In laudem Constantini*, 7; Emperor Constantine had subdued both demons and barbarians.

⁹⁷ Gaudentius, *Tractatus*, 12. 8, 12. 4: 'Etenim [diabolus] seducens humanum genus, ut derelicto deo ipsum satanam per simulacra colerent manu facta, principatum violenter tenuit, exercuit tyrannidem in tantum, ut advenientem verum principem suum non recognosceret mundus, ipsius quippe diaboli praestigiis obcaecatus.' Pseudo-Paulinus, *Poema ultimum*, 143–45. For the labelling of pagan deities as demons, see Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue*, pp. 172–74.

⁹⁸ Gaudentius, *Tractatus*, 6. 7: 'Unde dicitur universis incredulis: "Vos de diabolo patre nati estis." Sicut enim, "quotquot spiritu dei ducuntur, hi filii dei sunt" [Romans 8. 14] secundum doctrinam Pauli apostoli, ita, quotquot spiritu diaboli abducuntur, filii daemoniorum sunt'; 6. 6: 'Audi ergo non solum daemones Aegyptios esse, sed etiam cultores eorum, quicumque pertinaciter in incredulitate versantur, filii tenebrarum cum sunt; nam filii sunt daemonum.' Jews were demonized, e.g., in Matthew 23. 15; John 8. 44–47; Revelation 3. 9 (the synagogue of Satan).

⁹⁹ Caesarius Arelatensis, *Sermo*, 12. 5. Caesarius adds that even demons acknowledged the existence of God but did not obey him.

¹⁰⁰ Gaudentius, *Tractatus*, 6. 6 (see note 98 above).

¹⁰¹ Caesarius Arelatensis, *Sermo*, 53. 1: 'Lucem deserunt, et ad tenebras currunt: contemnunt deum, amplectentur diabolum: vitam deserunt, mortem sequuntur: Christum repudiant, et ad sacrilegia vadunt'.

III

Using Pagans

Who are the pagans being depicted in the fourth- and fifth-century Christian literature? We have already discussed the strengthening of Christian self-understanding and the use of pagans as the mirror for being Christian. Are there 'real' pagans behind this image?

Christian authors sometimes refer to pagans in factual everyday situations. Different labels and stereotypes such as stupidity, rudeness, and rusticity are projected onto these people who nonetheless form a point of reference in the contemporary social reality. For example, in their sermons Caesarius of Arles, Augustine of Hippo, and Maximus of Turin complain of people who stick to their idolatrous practices and even draw their Christian neighbours into pagan festivities.

In addition to these pagans existing and acting in real social contexts, it is possible to discern the pagans as a theological construction. These theological phantoms, as A. T. Kraabel calls them, function as a mirror in which one's theological views and moral conduct are reflected, tested, and defended. Thus, there are pagans and 'pagans' in the same way as there are Jews and 'Jews' in Christian literature. In the early Christian writings such as the gospels, theological Jews were vital for the construction of Christian self-understanding. The most notorious theological creation was the hostile image of the Pharisees in the internal debates of Christians.¹⁰²

However, it is beyond the scope of this article to make attempts to identify any 'real' objects of these depictions. It suffices here to speak of the different levels in the portrayals and the various uses of the images. Needless to say, it is often impossible to distinguish between these levels of 'real' and 'fictive' pagans. The same image functions on many levels; for instance, both in marking a separation from ideological (real or fictive) opponents and building boundaries of correct ritual behaviour in the writer's community. Instead of trying to distinguish between pagans in a social reality and pagans in ideological discourse, I use examples to discuss the different ways in which the images were used.

¹⁰² The term 'theological phantoms' is used by A. T. Kraabel, 'Synagoga Caeca: Systematic Distortion in Gentile Interpretations of Evidence for Judaism in the Early Christian Period', in *To see ourselves as others see us*, ed. by Neusner and Frerichs, pp. 219–46 (p. 219); Kraabel refers to the construction of Jews for the internal debates of Christians in the New Testament writings.

'In the Manner of Ancient Pagans'

Pagans were used for keeping discipline within the Church. Bishops and other ecclesiastical leaders tried to control religiously ambivalent persons, mocking them as pagans. In the sixth century, Gregory I, bishop of Rome, speaks of the 'gentile' within the Church itself.¹⁰³ This is his way of exiling religious ambivalence and unaccepted conduct outside the Christian community. In this line of thought non-conforming Christians are actually pagans (*gentiles*). Caesarius of Arles reprimands his parishioners for still visiting the idols. They were not only reluctant to demolish the shrines of pagans, but they even dared to restore those shrines that had already been razed. Furthermore, they even started rioting against those who tried to destroy the shrines and attacked those who attempted to tear the idols down. Why did these miserable people (*miseri*) come to the church? Why did they let themselves be baptized if they afterwards returned to the idols in the manner of a dog that returns to his own vomit?¹⁰⁴

In the lamentations of the church leaders, there were various groups among those who either were called pagans or were regarded as idolatrous: those who were already baptized, catechumens, and unbaptized persons. Gregory I writes of 'stupid rustics who worship Apollo in the manner of ancient pagans' ('*ex antiquorum more gentilium ab stulto rusticorum populo Apollo colebatur*') and 'the insane crowd of infidels who sweated at blasphemous sacrifices' ('*infidelium insana multitudo sacrificiis sacrilegis insudabat*'). R. A. Markus suggests that these people mentioned by Gregory may have been two distinct groups; Gregory sometimes distinguishes between baptized Christians who lapse into their former idolatrous habits and those not yet baptized whom he calls *pagani*. However, he does not always use terms such as *pagani*, *infideles*, and *idolorum cultores* with precision.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Gregorius Magnus, *Moralia in Iob*, 29. 26. 53. According to Markus, 'Gregory the Great's Pagans', p. 25, the term functions as a theological category, defining the persons not within the faithful community.

¹⁰⁴ Caesarius Arelatensis, *Sermo*, 53. 1 (a reference to II Peter 2. 22).

¹⁰⁵ Gregorius Magnus, *Dialogus*, 2. 8 (= *Vita Benedicti*, 8). Gregory tells us of Benedict of Nursia (480–547) who one generation earlier had found these people still practising old cults (including the cult of Apollo). Markus, 'Gregory the Great's Pagans', pp. 27–30.

Ignorant Outsiders or Rebellious Insiders?

A number of Christian writers tended to denounce paganism either as religious ignorance or apostasy. Accordingly, pagans could be regarded as ignorant fools who knew nothing of the true deity and who had been led astray by demons.¹⁰⁶ Or they could be considered apostates who had once recognized and yet in their arrogance abandoned the true deity.¹⁰⁷

The fact that pagans were seen as either ignorant outsiders or rebellious insiders had its consequences in the fourth- and fifth-century Christian attitude towards how pagans should be treated. The argument of ignorant outsiders did not work as a motivation or justification for compelling pagans to Christianity: this line of thought despised pagans as blind fools but left them to their stupid rituals. Instead, the classification of pagans as deviants and apostates from the primeval monotheism could be harnessed as justification for coercing them to 'return' to the true deity. The apostasy argument became prevalent at the turn of the fifth century among prominent writers such as Augustine, Athanasius of Alexandria, and John Chrysostom. For Augustine, all pagans are culpable because they have suppressed the truth in iniquity even though the deity is manifest to them.¹⁰⁸

Versatile Labels

Besides the charges of heresy, sorcery, and Manichaeism, the pagan label is one of the most frequently employed weapons against ecclesiastical or political opponents. Apparent Christians, even powerful bishops, are branded as pagans or crypto-

¹⁰⁶ This line of argumentation was prevalent in early Christianity (e.g. among the early Christian apologists Aristides, Justin, Athenagoras, and Theophilus) and was influenced by Hellenistic Jewish anti-pagan polemic (e.g. Philo of Alexandria, Josephus, and the Jewish Sibylline oracles). Kathy L. Gaca, 'Paul's Uncommon Declaration in Romans 1:18–32 and its Problematic Legacy for Pagan and Christian Relations', *Harvard Theological Review*, 92 (1999), 165–98 (pp. 166–71, 177–80).

¹⁰⁷ This argument is used by Apostle Paul in Romans 1. 18–32 and followed by Tatian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Lactantius, and later by Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus, John Chrysostom, Augustine, and the so-called Ambrosiaster: see Gaca, 'Paul's Uncommon Declaration', pp. 171–77, 180–95. Gaca (p. 167) argues that Paul's view was 'initially a lone voice' that did not instantly become prevalent. Romans 1. 18–32 could provide a convenient rationale for religious coercion from the turn of the fifth century onwards.

¹⁰⁸ Augustinus, *Sermo*, 26. 30, 26. 32, ed. by Dolbeau. Gaca, 'Paul's Uncommon Declaration', pp. 177, 180, n. 46, 198.

pagans. The adversaries of Severus, the patriarch of Antioch, accused him of still esteeming all pagan things and claimed that he had converted to Christianity only for show.¹⁰⁹ The *magister militum* Stilicho, who virtually governed the western empire during the reign of Emperor Honorius, was labelled as a pagan after his demise.¹¹⁰

In their mutual polemic, Christian sects branded each other as pagans. Rivals were accused of imitating pagan philosophy which could mean anything that the accuser thought deviated from his own inclination.¹¹¹ For example, Athanasius of Alexandria labelled his Homoian (Arian) opponents as pagans. In his eyes, Emperor Constantius II had lapsed into paganism.¹¹² In the heat of the Nestorian controversy, both Cyril of Alexandria and Nestorius refuted the Christological doctrine of the other as pagan impiety and polytheism.¹¹³ The rival doctrines were constantly undermined by associating them with pagan philosophy. Ambrose of Milan refuted his Homoian (Arian) competitors by stating that they had rejected the Apostle to follow Aristotle.¹¹⁴

In the imperial legislation the Christian mainstream was defined as 'Christianity' while other Christian inclinations were categorized as un-Christian. The

¹⁰⁹ In his biography of Severus of Antioch, Zacharias Scholasticus defends Severus against the slanders of his opponents (*Vita Severi*, ed. and trans. by M. A. Kugener, in *Patrologia Orientalis*, II.1 (Paris: Librairie de Paris, 1907), pp. 8–9); Vinzent, 'Das "heidnische" Ägypten', p. 52.

¹¹⁰ Pagan label: Orosius, *Historia adversus paganos*, 7. 38. 1, 7. 38. 6; Hieronymus, *Epistula*, 123. For their part, pagan writers denounced Stilicho for Christian intolerance (Rutilius Namatianus, *De reditu suo*, 41; Zosimus, *Historia nova*, 5. 38).

¹¹¹ E.g., Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 1. 22 of Manichaeans. Klein, 'Hellenen', pp. 436–37.

¹¹² Athanasius, *Oratio contra Arianos*, 3. 16, 4. 10.

¹¹³ Cyrillus Alexandrinus, e.g., in *Epistula*, 1. 7, 1. 27 *ad monachos* (= *ACO*, 1.1.1, pp. 13, 23); Nestorius, e.g., in *Epistula II Nestorii ad Cyrillum* (= *ACO*, 1.1.1, pp. 29–32); and *Epistula I Nestorii ad Caelestinum papam* (= *ACO*, 1.2, pp. 12–14).

¹¹⁴ Ambrosius, *Expositio psalmi 118 sermo*, 22. 10 (CSEL, 62, p. 493): 'reliquerunt apostolum, secuntur Aristotelem'. For the connection between Greek philosophy and heresy, see Andrew Lenox-Conyngham, 'Ambrose and Philosophy', in *Christian Faith and Greek Philosophy in Late Antiquity: Essays in Tribute to George Christopher Stead*, ed. by Lionel R. Wickham and Caroline P. Bammel (Leiden: Brill, 1993), pp. 112–28 (p. 120). The contamination of Greek philosophy was used as a weapon against rival sects already in the second and third centuries, e.g. by Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Hippolytus. Later, Origen was represented as an example of a theologian who had allowed pagan philosophy (Plato) to lead him to heresy.

ruling of 379 declares that heretics are not Christians even though they use the same terms for their prelates as the real, that is, mainstream, Christians do.¹¹⁵

The uses of pagans and paganism were multipurpose in both polemic and legislation. In the fifth century, the charge of paganism was increasingly connected with accusations of magic and divination. Linked together, paganism and magic formed an efficient arsenal in the power struggles in imperial courts in both east and west.¹¹⁶ As R. W. Mathisen remarks, the accusations of magic and divination were a ritualistic way of segregating the problematic elements of the community.¹¹⁷ In fifth-century Gaul, Caesarius of Arles gave instructions to 'those who not only pay attention to omens but — what is worse — consult seers, soothsayers and fortune-tellers in the manner of pagans'.¹¹⁸ However, in the marking of boundaries between the Christian sacraments and miracles (that is, the accepted religious activity) and pagan sorcery (that is, the unaccepted religious activity), even the church leaders were not always capable of drawing clear demarcations between the two.

The Good Pagan as Self-rebuke

Ecclesiastical writers sometimes speak of good pagans and pay tribute to pagan virtues.¹¹⁹ For example, Augustine declared that many pagans live far more respectably

¹¹⁵ *Codex Theodosianus*, 16. 5. 5 (in 379): 'Omnesque perversae istius superstitionis magistri pariter et ministri, seu illi sacerdotali adsumptione episcoporum nomen infamant seu, quod proximum est, presbyterorum vocabulo religionem mentiuntur, seu etiam se diaconos, cum nec christiani quidem habeantur, appellant, hi conciliabulis damnatae dudum opinionis abstineant.'

¹¹⁶ Noethlichs, 'Kaisertum', p. 25. For the construction of the connection between paganism and magic, see Caroline Humfress, 'Roman Law, Forensic Argument and the Formation of Christian Orthodoxy (III–VI Centuries)', in *Orthodoxie, Christianisme, histoire / Orthodoxy, Christianity, History*, ed. by Susanna Elm, Éric Rebillard, and Antonella Romano (Rome: École française de Rome, 2000), pp. 125–47.

¹¹⁷ Ralph W. Mathisen, 'Crossing the Supernatural Frontier in Western Late Antiquity', in *Shifting Frontiers in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Mathisen and Sivan, pp. 309–20 (pp. 310–11, 320), referring to Caesarius of Arles. For the Christianization of Gaul, see Raymond Van Dam, *Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 115–76.

¹¹⁸ The title of Caesarius Arelatensis, *Sermo*, 54.

¹¹⁹ For a more thorough discussion on good pagans in late antique Christian literature, see Majastina Kahlos, 'Bene currunt sed non in via currunt — The Image of Good Pagans in Fourth and Fifth Century Christian Literature', in *Imagology and Cross-cultural Encounters in History*, ed. by Alenius, Fält, and Mertaniemi, pp. 63–69.

and chastely than those wretched Christians who waste their time in feasting, drinking, and sexual excesses. Christian immorality and immoderation were an offence to the good pagans and it gave them an opportunity to despise Christians for their corruption. Furthermore, it prevented these good pagans from approaching Christianity. Respectable pagans hardly wanted to be converted when they saw Christians persisting with their recklessness.¹²⁰ The image of good pagans was a rhetorical device used by Church leaders for reproaching their Christian congregations. Thus, Augustine chastised his listeners by creating a favourable depiction of pagans. His message was that Christians should behave better than pagans.¹²¹ Therefore, good pagans functioned as a mirror image for the moral education of Christians themselves.

A mirror like this was used as a rhetorical tool by Salvian of Marseille (c. 400–80) against contemporary Christians. Salvian reproaches his mainstream Christian audience and sets before his readers an image of good Arian Goths and Vandals.¹²² Salvian's approach is comparable to the first-century representation of Germanic tribes in Tacitus's *Germania*: Tacitus had invested Germans with bravery, valour, and chastity — precisely those virtues that in his opinion the contemporary Romans lacked. This resembles the early modern and modern depictions of the noble savage in which positive values are projected onto remote worlds.¹²³

Pagans, Jews, and Heretics — Blending Rivals

As was discussed above, a great variety of Mediterranean cults and practices were bundled together into one single entity. In the argumentation of ecclesiastical writers and in imperial legislation, all religious dissidents were grouped together into a single enemy of the true Christianity. Consequently, three dissident groups — pagans, Jews, and heretics — were demonized as all being adherents of the same

¹²⁰ Augustinus, *In psalmos enarrationes*, 25. 2. 14. Other reproaches: Augustinus, *Sermo*, 26. 8 Dolbeau; *In psalmos enarrationes*, 100. 8.

¹²¹ The argument *a minori ad maius* was already being used by Apostle Paul (Romans 2. 14–15; cf. 2. 26–27). J. C. Salzmann, 'Vorbildliche Heiden: Überlegungen zum 1. Clemensbrief 55,1', in *Die Heiden*, ed. by Feldmeier and Heckel, pp. 317–24 (p. 321).

¹²² For example, Salvianus, *De gubernatione dei*, 7. 91. David Lambert, 'Barbarians in Salvian's *De gubernatione Dei*', in *Ethnicity and Culture in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Stephen Mitchell and Geoffrey Greatrex (London: Duckworth, 2000), pp. 103–15 (pp. 109–10).

¹²³ Smith, 'Differential Equations on Constructing the Other', p. 237.

error and delusion.¹²⁴ Gaudentius of Brescia, for example, lumps together the error of pagans, the iniquity of Jews, and the wickedness of heretics that all corrupt the mass of faith with the leaven of the devil.¹²⁵ Similarly, Theodoret of Cyrrhus perceives the ecclesiastical life filled with continuous struggle against pagans, Jews, and heretics.¹²⁶ Christian writers certainly recognized differences in their rivals, but these dissimilarities were taken only as nuances of the same error. Chromatius of Aquileia writes that the Hebrews search for the truth from their Law whereas pagans seek it from their futile erudition; for their part, the heretics have false revelations. The efforts of all these three inclinations are useless.¹²⁷ Pagans, Jews, and heretics, treated as interchangeable, appear together in various combinations in imperial proclamations against religious dissidents in the fifth-century legislation. A fourth group, the Samaritans, is occasionally added to this category of errors.¹²⁸

Ecclesiastical writers even portrayed pagans and Jews, pagans and heretics, or pagans, Jews, and heretics all together as forming an alliance against the true 'Catholic' church.¹²⁹ Basil of Caesarea, for instance, writes that Jews and pagans have fought against each other, but at the same time they have also struggled together against Christianity.¹³⁰ The bundling together of theological opponents with Jews

¹²⁴ Lellia Cracco Ruggini, 'Gli antichi e il diverso', in *L'intolleranza: uguali e diversi nella storia*, ed. by C. Bori (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1986), pp. 13–49 (p. 39), speaks of, not the tripartite dialogue, but tripartite proceedings against pagans, Jews, and heretics.

¹²⁵ Gaudentius, *Tractatus*, 7. 21: 'Videte itaque, ne vel in modico suadeamini adquiescere aut errori gentilium aut iniquitati Iudaeorum aut hereticorum nequitiae, qui fermento diaboli totam fidei massam perfidiae acore corrumpunt.'

¹²⁶ Theodoretus Cyrensis, *Epistula*, 81, 113 (PG, 83, cols 1260, 1317).

¹²⁷ Chromatius Aquileiensis, *Sermo*, 28. 2 in *Opera*, ed. by R. Étaix and J. Lemarié, *Corpus Christianorum*, Series Latina, 9A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1974), p. 129).

¹²⁸ *Codex Theodosianus*, 15. 5. 5 (in 425): pagans and Jews grouped together ('vel iudaeae impietatis amentia vel stolidae paganitatis errore adque insania'); 16. 5. 63 (in 425): pagans, all heresies, perfidies, and schisms grouped together ('omnes haereses omnesque perfidias, omnia schismata superstitionesque gentilium, omnes catholicae legi inimicos insectamur errores'); 16. 8. 26 (in 423): pagans, Jews, and heretics all together ('abominandorum paganorum, iudaeorum etiam adque haeticorum spiritum audaciamque compressimus'); 16. 10. 24 (in 423). Despite being lumped together in imperial proclamations, the groups are treated in divergent ways in the actual decisions. For the grouping in the legislation of Theodosius II, see Millar, *A Greek Roman Empire*, pp. 119–20, 126.

¹²⁹ D. H. Williams, 'Necessary Alliance or Polemical Portrayal? Tracing the Historical Alignment of Arians and Pagans in the Later Fourth Century', *Studia Patristica*, 29 (1997), 178–94.

¹³⁰ Basilus, *Homilia 24 contra Sabellianos et Arium et Anomaeos*, 1 (PG, 31, col. 599).

and pagans functioned as a weapon in the vehement disputes between Christian sects. Theodoret of Cyrrhus implies that Jews, Arians, and 'the insignificant number of remaining pagans' were all disappointed at the strengthening of the mainstream church in Antioch under Alexander, bishop of Antioch (412–17).¹³¹ In the middle of the conflict between mainstream and Arian Christians, Athanasius of Alexandria claimed that, in Alexandria, Arians, Jews, and pagans allied with each other to oppose the newly elected bishop, Athanasius himself. Athanasius stated that the Arian imperial prefect, Philagrius, gathered and armed a crowd of pagans and Jews to harass mainstream Christians.¹³²

Conclusion: From a Minority to a Majority

In the second and third centuries, when Christian writers had represented a small but growing minority in Roman society, the depictions of the surrounding pagan majority had functioned as a demarcation of boundaries for Christian communities. However, over the course of the fourth and fifth centuries, Christian groups gradually became the dominant majority.¹³³ Under these altered circumstances, Christian writers continued to make ample use of an arsenal similar to that of the second- and third-century Christian apologists. Similar attacks against the blind and inane worshippers of senseless idols reappear in post-Constantinian Christian writing.

The earlier depictions had helped to construe and defend the self-understanding of a marginal minority surrounded by a pagan majority culture, while from the fourth century onwards the depictions of pagans reinforced and reaffirmed

¹³¹ Theodoretus Cyrensis, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 5.35. Theodoret describes how the great festivities organized by Alexander set these three groups to groaning and wailing. For the rivalry between mainstream and Arian Christians in Antioch, see Susan Wessel, *Cyril of Alexandria and the Nestorian Controversy: The Making of a Saint and of a Heretic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 61.

¹³² Athanasius, *Epistula encyclica*, 3 (PG, 25, cols 228–29). The purpose of the alliance of Arians, pagans, and Jews in Athanasius's narrative was to undermine the legitimacy of the Arian rival bishop of Alexandria, Gregory. For the conflict, see Wessel, *Cyril of Alexandria*, pp. 37–38.

¹³³ For the shifting position of pagans in the Christian Roman Empire, see Pierre Chuvin, *Chronique des derniers païens: la disparition du paganisme* (Paris: Fayard 1990, repr. 2009); Frank R. Trombley, *Hellenic Religion and Christianization c. 370–529*, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 1993–94); and, most recently, Neil McLynn, 'Pagans in a Christian Empire', in *A Companion to Late Antiquity*, ed. by Philip Rousseau (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), pp. 572–87.

Christian identity in its growth into a majority. As Guy G. Stroumsa points out, the antagonistic attitudes cherished by early Christian apologists became dangerous rhetorical weapons in the hands of the powerful church fathers.¹³⁴ The world view based on the cosmic division between good and evil had evolved within the small minority during the early empire, but continued to be influential in the struggle against religious rivals during the late empire. The intense demonization of opponents, Jews, pagans, and heretics alike, necessarily had divergent consequences in the second century and in the fifth century. In the fifth century the arsenal was too strong in the employment of the Christian majority that could and from time to time did resort to force against religious dissidents and their cult places.¹³⁵

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¹³⁴ Guy G. Stroumsa, 'Early Christianity as Radical Religion: Context and Implications', *Israel Oriental Studies*, 14 (1994), 173–93, and Stroumsa, 'Tertullian on Idolatry and the Limits of Tolerance', in *Tolerance and Intolerance in Early Judaism and Christianity*, ed. by Graham Stanton and Guy G. Stroumsa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 173–84.

¹³⁵ For religious violence and temple destructions in the fourth and fifth centuries, see, e.g., Karl Leo Noethlichs, 'Heidenverfolgung', in *RAC*, XIII (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1986), pp. 1149–90; Michael Gaddis, *There Is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ: Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); and *From Temple to Church: Destruction and Renewal of Local Cultic Topography in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Johannes Hahn, Stephen Emmel, and Ulrich Gotter (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

Appendix

Binary oppositions used in Christian literature

Us	Others
Christians	Pagans
Light	Darkness
<i>Civitas dei, civitas caelestis</i>	<i>Civitas diaboli, terrena civitas</i>
The eternal city, the immortal city, the city of believers	The temporal city, the mortal city, the city of the wicked
Jerusalem	Babylon
Jerusalem	Rome
Order	Chaos
Unity, simplicity, clarity	Variety, complexity, confusion
Unity, <i>concordia</i>	Discord, <i>discordia</i>
Certainty	Uncertainty
Now	Before
Religio	Superstitio
<i>Vera religio</i>	<i>Falsa religio</i>
The worship of the true god	The worship of idols
New <i>religio</i>	Old <i>superstitio</i>
Public	Private
Cleanliness	Filthiness
Health	Sickness
Utility	Damage
God	The devil
One true god	Many false gods, demons, idols
Angels, good angels	Demons, wicked angels, fallen angels
Holy	Profane
Sober	Excessive
Truthfulness	Emptiness
Seriousness	Superficiality
Gravity	Frivolity
Content without decoration	Decoration without content

Us	Others
The right use	The wrong use
Eternity	Temporality
Invariability	Change
Truth, <i>veritas</i>	Error, <i>error</i>
Truth	Falsehood
Truth	Supposition, <i>opinio</i>
True / divine prophecies	False / demonic prophecies
Divine wisdom	Human / profane opinion
Spirit	Flesh
Humility	Pride
Sight	Blindness
One religion	Plurality
One road	Many roads
Freedom of the true faith	Servitude of the false religion
Real freedom	False freedom

Part II

Other Peoples

MIGRATING MOTIFS OF NORTHERN BARBARISM: DEPICTING GAULS AND GERMANS IN IMPERIAL LITERATURE

Antti Lampinen

'You see', he said, 'they are the Others
and it cannot be They without You
nor can it be You without Them'
'You see', he said, 'they are the Others
and you must face them without fail
if you want your image to be indelible
and remain what it is.'

Odysseas Elytis, *Axion Esti*, 1959

Introduction

The Changing Roman Experience of Barbarism

The purpose of this study is to examine the narrative elements and motifs used in depicting and representing the northern barbarians from the late republic onwards, with particular attention being paid to the change and transfer of literary images around and after the Roman incorporation of the Three Gauls. As a starting point, it is suggested that presenting the Gallic provincials through similar, largely hostile, themes (indeed, *topoi*) as the 'free Gauls' of earlier Greek and Roman literature would have in the long run been incongruous. At roughly the same time, the culturally rather similar groups of 'Germans' began to form a source of concern for the Romans, perhaps enabling a transfer of mental representations that originally were developed in contact with the 'Gauls'. An insight to these developments is sought by comparing the emerging and interacting iconospheres of Gauls and Germans in order to judge whether it actually is appropriate to consider the different barbarian 'nations' as constituting separate entities

in the imperial mental geography, or whether they should be properly seen as variations of a much more indistinctly recognized thematic ensemble that provided the authors with ample material to display their erudition while satisfying the expectations of their audience.

The human experience of the other engenders the culturally shared representations of that experience, shaping identities, constructing meanings, and defining borders; but while the experience itself is dynamic and ever-changing in nature, its representations seem to combine an underlying adaptability with a certain conservatism of form. This dichotomy contributes importantly to the often inconsistent content of various representational ensembles. Hence, though notions concerning foreign peoples — the ethnic others that form the subject of this section — can occasionally be deeply entrenched, this can only stay so until the pressure for adapting the iconosphere grows too compelling to ignore. As mental maps, such perceptions express the way things are supposed to stand, but after information has been accumulating for some time, certain redrawing is usually needed.

There are, however, various forms that such imagological adaptation can take, and though our experience of the other does not stay the same, representations born in a certain context need not simply vanish when the context is altered. Even in mental geographies certain lingering *Montes Lunae* can be found. Very often certain powerful and persistent elements are transferred relatively unchanged — as far as possible — to represent another, somewhat similar object. In the literary medium such depictions can be particularly conservative with regard to change, and nowhere more so than in tradition-bound Classical literature: it has been noted that for the Romans, ‘new barbarians’ did not and could not exist. Indeed, in literature we find the same motifs circulating after hundreds of years, often attached to barbarian nations that to us seem quite distinct.¹

¹ On the impossibility of ‘new barbarians’, see Herwig Wolfram, *The Roman Empire and its Germanic Peoples*, trans. by Thomas Dunlap (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 37; on ethnographic inheritance from pre-imperial authors, see Patrick Amory, *People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy, 489–554* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 20 n. 19; on the so-called ‘doctrine of transference’, see *ibid.* p. 21. Examples of the conventional barbarian depictions recycled in new contexts: Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 31. 11. 12; Synesius, *De regno*, 21–23; Orosius, *Historia adversus paganos*, 7. 3. 4. 5; Hieronymus, *Quaestiones Hebraicae*, 10; Procopius *De bello Vandalico*, 3. 2. 2 (cf. Cyrillus Scythopolitanus, *Vita Sabae*, 72), 3. 4. 24; Evagrius Scholasticus, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 3. 2. 25 (cf. 1. 17); Stephanus Byzantinus, *De urbibus* s.v. *Skythai* (cf. *SHA*, *Marcus Aurelius Antoninus*, 10. 6); Leo Diaconus, *Historia*, 9. 6; Anna Comnena, *Alexias*, 10. 5. 308–09, 10. 6. 311, 14. 2. 439–40, 14. 4. 450. Scholarship on the subject includes Averil Cameron and Alan Cameron, ‘Christianity and Tradition in the Historiography of the Late

Incorporating the Celts into the Hellenic mental geography took a drastic step when the northern barbarians attacked Delphi in 279 BCE. Suddenly and violently a shadowy assemblage of western barbarians became such a threat to Hellas that their comparison with the Persians appeared quite justified.² For the Greeks the West seemed nearly as inextinguishable as the infiniteness of Persia in both its landmass and the number of its inhabitants.³ Only gradually did the Greek view acquire a more balanced nature. The Romans, however, had already encountered the Celtic tribes long before the Greeks had their own traumatic experience. More importantly, the Roman perceptions of the northern barbarians later encountered a formative phase decisively different from the development of the Greek iconosphere when large areas filled by these foreigners in the Roman mental geography were incorporated in the empire. Already the founding of the province of Gallia Transalpina (or *Provincia*) in the late second century BCE had brought some of the Gauls under Roman rule, although this did not prevent the majority of provincials from being regarded as exploitable barbarians, as will be seen in the case of Cicero's testimonies. The Greek involvement did not cease, however, as it was exactly at this stage of image formation that the very influential Gallic ethnography of Posidonius was compiled. His ethnographic observations were, in turn, used to suit Caesar's ends in his depiction of the Gauls, though mostly shorn of their philosophizing aspects.

The subjugation of the three Gallic provinces led the Roman assemblage of images on the northern barbarians to undergo several changes, some of which can already be discerned in Caesar's *Bellum Gallicum*. The Gallic enemy, feared for so

Empire', *Classical Quarterly*, 14 (1964), 316–28; Donald M. Nicol, 'The Byzantine View of Western Europe', *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, 8 (1967), 315–39; Averil Cameron, 'Agathias on the Early Merovingians', *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa*, 2nd ser., 37 (1968), 95–140; Rolf Hachmann, 'Der Begriff des Germanischen', *Jahrbuch für internationale Germanistik*, 7 (1975), 113–44 (pp. 121, 128); Paul Stephenson, 'Anna Comnena's *Alexiad* as a Source for the Second Crusade?', *Journal of Medieval History*, 29 (2003), 41–54; cf. also Malcolm Chapman, *The Celts: The Construction of a Myth* (Basingstoke: St Martin's Press, 1992), pp. 53–54.

² Allusions between the Gauls and the Persians (mostly in connection with the Delphic attack): *Collectanea Alexandrina*, 131; *exempla* include Polybius, *Historiae*, 2. 35. 7–8; Pausanias, *Graeciae descriptio*, 10. 19. 4, 10. 19. 11–12, 22. 9. 12 (cf. Herodotus, *Historiae*, 8. 36).

³ On the lack of *eremoi* in the West, see James S. Romm, *The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought: Geography, Exploration and Fiction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 35–36; vestiges of a possible notion of the western barbarians beyond numbering: Callimachus, *Hymni*, 4. 175 (Celts as numberless as the snowflakes; cf. Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica*, 2. 674–75); Livius, *Ab urbe condita*, 38. 16. 13; Strabo, *Geographica*, 4. 1. 2, 4. 3; Justinus, *Epitome*, 24. 4. 1, 25. 2. 8 (Gallic fecundity).

long, was now reduced into the status of subjects, while free northern barbarians not unlike the Gauls of yore were encountered across the new borders, at first among the peoples labelled as Germans by Caesar, and not soon after among the inhabitants of Britain. In a situation where the ethnographic observations could not (and, indeed, did not seek to) create clear distinctions between barbarian groups sharing so many cultural traits, and where moreover the extensive borrowing of motifs and topoi from earlier writers was the norm among the literati, it would seem likely that the Roman depictions of Gauls came to wield a strong influence over characterizations of both Germanic and British barbarians.⁴ Descriptions of the British have been largely left out at this instance, but all things considered, they are a strong candidate for receiving many topical elements of the Gallic-born iconosphere of northern barbarism.

Although attempts to systematize such iconospheres, or representational ensembles, run the risk of excessively limiting our vision of the basically illogical nature of such complexes, it may be functional to adopt some kind of categorization of the different themes and topoi. A superficially uncomplicated, historically motivated separation into Greek and Roman elements would be an oversimplification of the complex dynamic of adaptive yet tradition-bound image construction and borrowing that took place for the whole length of the classical culture and beyond it.⁵

⁴ Similarities between portraying different *Nordvölker* were already studied in Eduard Norden, *Die germanische Urgeschichte in Tacitus' Germania* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1920), an important departure from earlier scholarship. Although his introduction of the concept of *Wandermotive* to explain the ethnographic commonplaces was a major contribution, certain approaches of Norden could be considered simplifying, such as his confident reliance on Posidonian influence on later authors — confidence passed on in German scholarship even up to recent works; cf. Martina Janz, *Das Fremdenbild in der Literatur der Römischen Republik und der Augusteischen Zeit: Vorstellungen und Sichtweisen am Beispiel von Hispanien und Gallien* (Frankfurt: Lang, 1995), pp. 233–34. Posidonius's well-proven influence on later authors should not be seen as the only medium of transfer for climatic and other ethnographic theories to reach the Roman writers. The main problems with Posidonius's Gallic ethnography are treated by Daphne Nash, 'Reconstructing Poseidonios' Celtic Ethnography: Some Considerations', *Britannia*, 7 (1976), 111–26; for a brief but recent summation, see Ronald Hutton, *Blood and Mistletoe: The History of the Druids in Britain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), p. 9.

⁵ Cf. Chapman, *The Celts*, p. 3. The Celts are not, of course, the only such example of reading and constructing later 'national' identities through readings in classics, though certainly one of the best-documented ones; Hutton, *Blood and Mistletoe*, pp. 170–71, 213–15, 418–22, as well as Aidan L. Owen, *The Famous Druids: A Survey of Three Centuries of English Literature on the Druids* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962). On similar constructions of 'Germans', see James S. Hirstein, *Tacitus' 'Germania' and Beatus Rhenanus (1485–1547)* (Frankfurt: Lang, 1995), pp.

Most meaningful might be to venture a distinction along the literary registers within which the northern, mostly European barbarians were mostly characterized. According to such an approach, the descriptions of northern barbarians could be broadly interpreted as taking part in several different registers of writing. These would include emotional, 'ethnographic', and idealizing discourses of barbarism, and were often combined at the authors' will, producing varied receptions. Another remarkable and slow-changing register of depicting cultural others would be the religious one; it will be seen that its uses in the Gallo-Germanic context were diverse.

Seeing Through the Authors: Glimpses of Lost Iconospheres

For most readers, the invective of Cicero against the Gallic provincials of Narbonensis in his speech *Pro Fonteio* is distinguished by both its bigotry and its rather off-centre emphasis on the Gallic character.⁶ In view of the purely fiscal nature of their charges against Fonteius,⁷ Cicero seems to spend considerable effort in undermining the overall legal capacity of the plaintiffs. While we do not know if this was a conventional strategy in cases involving provincials, the speech itself is a valuable specimen of the emotionally charged depiction of Gauls that perhaps enjoyed its widest popularity in Rome during the period of the late republic and early principate.⁸ Indeed,

170–71, 213–14, and Walter A. Goffart, *Barbarian Tides: The Migration Age and the Later Roman Empire* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), passim, speaking polemically against the excesses of such 'ethnogenesis' (e.g. pp. 4–5; cf. Amory, *People and Identity*, p. 13 for a more accommodating view).

⁶ Cicero, *Pro Fonteio*, 30–49. In his fourth Catilinarian speech, too, Cicero disparages the attitude and trustworthiness of the Gauls (though for different reasons) while alluding to the sack of Rome (as in the *Pro Fonteio*) and the malevolent Gallic desire to renew their ancient triumph (Cicero, *In Catilinam*, 4. 12, cf. also 3. 9).

⁷ Such considerations do not seem to have been uncommon among the Gallic provincials of Narbonensis, as is evidenced by Sallust (*De Catilinae coniuratione*, 40), where the plaintiffs are the Allobroges, later used as double agents in uncovering the conspiracy, and who, indeed, exhibited serious unrest a few years after that (Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum*, 1. 6. 44).

⁸ In the Greek literature, however, the most active and least objective period of characterizing the northern barbarians had already largely passed — though not without having an effect on the developing Roman literary imagination (cf. Antti Lampinen, 'Narratives of Impiety and Epiphany: Delphic Galatromachy and Roman Traditions of the Gallic Sack', *Studia Celtica Fennica*, 5 (2008), 37–54). The Greek reactions just after the Celtic attack of 279–278 BCE notably display acute trauma and powerful mythopoeia (see *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*, ed. by Wilhelm Dittenberger and others (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1898–), IV, 398; *Collectanea Alexandrina*, 131; Pausanias, *Graeciae*

Cicero considers the Gauls the most typical representatives of barbarism.⁹ But whereas Cicero's treatment of the Gauls as a group should probably be situated at the less subtle end of a thematic continuum, there were other authors who handled the subject matter in more indirect ways. In Sallust, the Gauls are the enemies against whom the Romans are truly fighting for their existence,¹⁰ just as they are in Livy — often in combination with religious themes.¹¹ Caesar's case is, of course, widely known and discussed. For all the seemingly objective material on the Gauls and their character in the *Bellum Gallicum*, Caesar still finds use for the topic of menacing barbarism in justifying his campaigns; but as will be seen, it is the Germans who are now cast as the terrifying, barely contained northern threat — with conscious allusions to the calamitous invasion of the Cimbri and Teutones in 113–101

descriptio, 10. 19–32; Justinus, *Epitome*, 24. 4. 3; cf. Craig Champion, 'The Soteria at Delphi: Aetolian Propaganda in the Epigraphical Record', *American Journal of Philology*, 116 (1996), 317–18). Regrettably, this emotionally charged phase has not left many extant literary monuments besides Callimachus's *Hymn to Delos* with its highly mythologizing imagery (lines 161–90), but some nearly coeval historians, especially Hieronymus of Cardia, seem to have featured quite prominently as sources for later writers such as Pausanias, *Graeciae descriptio* (1. 4, 10. 19–23; cf. Jane Hornblower, *Hieronymus of Cardia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 73, 144 n. 167) and fragmentarily preserved Timagenes, best represented by Ammianus's Gallic excursus at *Res gestae*, 14. 9–12; cf. Marta Sordi, 'Timagene di Alessandria: uno storico ellenocentrico e filobarbaro', in *ANRW*, II. 30. 1 (1982), 775–97 (pp. 778–79), and by the *Epitome* of Trogus/Justin (cf. José M. Alonso-Núñez, 'An Augustan World History: The *Historiae Philippicae* of Pompeius Trogus', *Greece & Rome*, 34 (1987), 56–72 (pp. 61–62); Giovanni Forni and Maria G. Angeli Bertinelli, 'Pompeo Trogo come fonte di storia', in *ANRW*, II. 30. 2 (1982), 1298–1362 (pp. 1298, 1312–13, 1329–32, 1344, 1354); Hornblower, *Hieronymus of Cardia*, pp. 65–67; Sordi, 'Timagene di Alessandria', pp. 779–80). The epigraphic remains of the Delphic *soteria* are treated at length by Georges Nachtergaele, *Les Galates en Grèce et les Sôteria de Delphes: recherches d'histoire et d'épigraphie hellénistiques* (Brussels: Palais des Académies, 1977).

⁹ Cicero: *Epistulae ad Atticum*, 7. 13a. 3; *Pro Balbo*, 32; *In Catilinam*, 3. 22; *De divinatione*, 1. 90. 1–91. 3; *Pro Flacco*, 63; *Pro Fonteio*, 4, 23, 31, 33, 44; *Pro Marcello*, 8; *De provinciis consularibus*, 33; *Orationes Philippicae*, 5. 5–6, 5. 37; *Epistulae ad Quintum fratrem*, 1. 1. 27; *Pro Sulla*, 36.

¹⁰ Sallustius, *Bellum Iugurthinum*, 114. 1–2. Such a mentality may have experienced some resurgence at Sallust's own time on account of the Cimbric and Teutonic menace — these groups not being clearly distinguished from the Gauls — and in any case clearly highlighting the dangers of ignoring the northern barbarians.

¹¹ Livius, *Ab urbe condita*, 5. 34. 4, 5. 38. 4, 5. 39. 9–13, 6. 1. 3, 7. 18. 1; cf. also Gary Forsythe, *Livy and Early Rome: A Study in Historical Method and Judgment* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1999), pp. 89–90; Iiro Kajanto, *God and Fate in Livy* (Turku: Turun yliopisto, 1957), pp. 59–60.

BCE.¹² All these accounts are, obviously, coloured by the overall political tone of writing utilized by the authors in question and coloured by their personal agendas.

Lucan's *De bello civili* includes some of the most impressive portrayals of Gauls and their land written in the emotionally charged register. In both the first-book survey of the druidic creed,¹³ and the justly famous description of a holy grove near Massilia,¹⁴ Lucan skilfully creates scenes of oppressive gloom with considerable alienating power. Although the passages have been variously interpreted,¹⁵ what seems clear enough is Lucan's conscious attempt to accentuate the impact of supernatural menace by manipulating the 'knowledge' of his audience on the gruesome nature of religious practices among the Gauls. The natural setting formed an inseparable element of depicting the character of northern peoples, as will also be seen in connection with Tacitus. Thus even Lucan's poetic creation adopts some aspects of the ethnographic register while first and foremost addressing the 'popular knowledge' and sentiments of his time in addition to political commentary.

The ethnographic register, influential from Herodotus onwards, could perhaps even be labelled scientific in the context of antiquity — if by 'scientific' we are ready to denote literature based on largely accepted and widely applied theories formulated by experts.¹⁶ However, it rarely exists without some connection to the

¹² Cf. Jane F. Gardner, 'The "Gallic Menace" in Caesar's Propaganda', *Greece & Rome*, 30 (1983), 181–89 (passim); Arne S. Christensen, *Cassiodorus, Jordanes and the History of the Goths: Studies in a Migration Myth* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2002), p. 15.

¹³ Lucanus, *De bello civili*, 1. 444–62.

¹⁴ Lucanus, *De bello civili*, 3. 399–425. See Stephen L. Dyson, 'Caepio, Tacitus, and Lucan's Sacred Grove', *CPh*, 65 (1970), 36–38.

¹⁵ Carin M. C. Green, 'Lucan *Bellum Civile* 1. 444–46: A Reconsideration', *CPh*, 89 (1994), 64–69 (p. 69): Lucan discusses pessimistically the barbaric nature of the Roman civil war, contrasting it with the supposed *barbaricus ritus* of the Gallic druids. This may be the subtext, especially as transgressions of boundaries/norms seem to form a theme in the *De bello civili*, but Lucan would hardly have assumed his audience to be able to lay aside their fascination for the macabre in this case, when he clearly takes advantage of it in other passages; cf. Shadi Bartsch, *Ideology in Cold Blood: A Reading of Lucan's Civil War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), pp. 2–3, 21–22, 145; Richard Gordon, 'Lucan's Erictho', in *Homo Viator: Classical Essays for John Bramble*, ed. by Michael Whitby, Philip Hardie, and Mary Whitby (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1987), pp. 231–41 (p. 236); Walter R. Johnson, *Momentary Monsters: Lucan and his Heroes* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), p. 4; David W. Vessey, *Statius and the Thebaid* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), p. 251.

¹⁶ Though Romm, *The Edges of the Earth*, p. 4, is certainly correct on the ancient cognitive gap separating the geographic specialists from the laypeople.

emotional or idealizing aspects of barbarism; for instance, some have wished to see Tacitus as advocating an objective, 'ethnological' approach in his descriptions of the northern barbarians.¹⁷ More balanced views, however, recognize Tacitus's agenda of political and cultural critique of his contemporary Rome; thus both *Agricola* and *Germania* have much in common with rhetoric and moralistic historiography than a simple geographic or ethnographic mindset in any modern sense of those fields.¹⁸ In the end, ancient ethnography tells us far more of the mental geography of the authors than the genuine one.

The most elaborately formulated and long-lived theory rationalizing the character of barbarian peoples was climatic determinism. In a way this ensemble of theories and speculation was about as elaborate an explanation for ethnographic differences as the ancient world was able to produce.¹⁹ Though the inherent theme of contrasting the middle clime of the world to its extremes in both climatic and ethnographic registers agreed well with Roman notions of imperial supremacy, interpreting climatically motivated characterization of the barbarian periphery as primarily serving the imperial ideology and *paideia*²⁰ is far too facile. The theme is, after all, well-nigh universal.²¹ The Greek ethnographers had located their

¹⁷ For instance Malcolm Todd, *The Northern Barbarians 100 B.C.–A.D. 300* (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1975), p. 27; similar readings of Caesar and other authors abound in the earlier scholarship, such as Arthur O. Lovejoy and George Boas, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1935; repr. 1997), pp. 362–66.

¹⁸ On *Germania*, see for instance Ellen O'Gorman, 'No Place Like Rome: Identity and Difference in the *Germania* of Tacitus', *Ramus*, 22 (1993), 135–54 (maintaining quite rightly that 'the *Germania*', as its full title *De origine et situ Germanorum* implies, is about Rome', p. 135). On the character of ancient ethnography, see Romm, *The Edges of the Earth*, pp. 46–48 (the inverse ethnocentrism); Amory, *People and Identity*, pp. 18–19.

¹⁹ A fine, if slightly dated study of the theme and its heritage in European thought is James W. Johnson, 'Of Differing Ages and Climes', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 21 (1960), 465–80.

²⁰ On climatic 'ethnogeography' as 'the language of providential imperial victory and expansionism', see Amory, *People and Identity*, pp. 21–22 (though 'ethnogeography' is not defined in *ibid.* pp. xiv–xvii). Touraj Daryaee, 'The Changing "Image of the World": Geography and Imperial Propaganda in Ancient Persia', in *Tradition and Innovation in the Ancient World*, ed. by Edward Dąbrowa (Kraków: Jagiellonian University Press, 2002), pp. 99–109, could serve as comparison in the context of another empire defining its power over peripheries through geographic image construction.

²¹ Just few examples are Daryaee, 'The Changing "Image of the World"', pp. 99–100; Muzhou Poo, *Enemies of Civilization: Attitudes towards Foreigners in Ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, and China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), pp. 24–27, 35–36 (Egypt and Han China), p. 39 (Sumer), p. 42 (Akkad), pp. 46–48 (China); Hyun Jin Kim, *Ethnicity and Foreigners in Ancient Greece and China: A Comparative Analysis of the Histories of Herodotus and the Shiji of*

barbarian peoples mainly in areas that later became Roman provinces, while occasionally making connections between peoples of the myth and the barbarians of their own times.²² The Roman writers obviously found it proper to follow the mythologizing accounts at certain points (and registers), but generally they seem to have been quite drawn to the climatic theory of the Greeks.²³

In addition to the above-mentioned registers of writing on the northern barbarians, a particular tendency should be taken into account; namely, the idealizing themes and attitudes nearly always present when the 'edges of the earth' are discussed

Sima Qian (London: Duckworth, 2009), pp. 67, 90–91 (the 'thaumatized' fringes of the Chinese world in the *Shanhaijing*), p. 92 (*Wufu*, the division of world into five hierarchical zones, projected back into earlier history during the Han dynasty), p. 165 n. 166 (climatic theories in the *Liji* and works by Xunzi).

²² On the case of Hyperboreans and Celts, see Timothy P. Bridgman, *Hyperboreans: Myth and History in Celtic-Hellenic Contacts* (New York: Routledge, 2005), passim, though his interpretation of certain authors and passages is too presupposing. Among the (mostly Hellenistic) mythologizing accounts, the Gauls provide perhaps the most relevant examples, among which Heracles features prominently in connection with the Gallic origins: Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 5. 24; Parthenius, *Narrationes amatoriae*, 30. Cf. Livius, *Ab urbe condita*, 5. 34. 6; Justinus, *Epitome*, 24. 4. 1–4. Ammianus used several Hellenistic mythologizing aetiologies largely through Timagenes: *Res gestae*, 15. 9. 3, 15. 9. 5, 15. 9. 6. It should be noted that some, though fewer, Greek aetiologies seem to have been ascribed to Germans as well, as attested by Tacitus, *Germania*, 3. 3 concerning Odysseus.

²³ Generally, the theory seems to have been widely accepted by both the Greek and Roman writers, though among the Roman authors it is most emphatically used by those well acquainted with the theories of the Greek schools, such as Vitruvius (*De architectura*, 6. 1. 1–3 = *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, ed. by F. Jacoby and others (Leiden: Brill, 1923–) [hereafter *FGrH*], Posidonius fr. 121), Seneca (*De ira*, 2. 15. 1. 4), and Manilius (*Astronomica*, 4. 794). Greek medical writers are, of course, closely involved with the theory: Pseudo-Hippocrates, *De aeribus, aquis, locis*, 12 [*de observantia ciborum*], 1. 1–4; Galenus, *De temperamentis*, 2. 5. 5–6; *De sanitate tuenda*, 1. 10. 18. Ever since Plato's *Republic* (435 c), the framework was used in a wide variety of registers, and of a wide variety of barbarian peoples: e.g. Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 35. 28. 1; Livius, *Ab urbe condita*, 45. 30. 7; Strabo, *Geographica*, 7. 1. 2; Pomponius Mela, *De chorographia*, 3. 33; Curtius Rufus, *Historiae Alexandri Magni*, 7. 3. 6, 8. 9. 20; Florus, *Epitome*, 1. 37. 2; Dionysius Periegetes, *Periegesis*, 283–85; Ptolemaeus, *Tetrabiblos*, 2. 2. 4, 3. 13–15; Agathias, *Historiae*, 1. 19. This theoretic frame is also alluded to in panegyrics; cf. XII Panegyrici Latini [hereafter *Pan. Lat.*], xii(ix). 24. 1. In Tacitus, an obvious climatic explanation for the ferocity of the barbarians is *Germania*, 30. 1 on the Chatti. A good summary of the climatologic themes can be found in Yves Albert Dauge, *Le Barbare: recherches sur la conception romaine de la barbarie et de la civilisation* (Brussels: Latomus, 1981), pp. 467–71.

in ancient literature.²⁴ Such idealization of the uncivilized fringe seems to have been comparatively easily incorporated into the climatically articulated discourse of difference. This gave rise both to the retracing of the vanished Golden Age to the peripheries of the known world and to the curiosity directed towards the primitive as manifested in cultures outside the Mediterranean.²⁵ The role of such primitives is, quite universally, to reinforce the normative position of the centre by embodying the inadequate opposition to its ideals,²⁶ while occasionally acting as a window to the distant, already lost past of the societies defining their identities.

That such differing approaches can in most cases be discerned relatively clearly — though usually intermixed — among the classical authors should not be understood to mean that their use would have been either clearly premeditated or controlled by anything more concrete than culturally shared representations and genre-related traditions. Naturally, not all narrative devices discerned in a given literary work are motivated by the author's desire to manipulate his audience; some things about foreign peoples 'just were so' — in other words, they were so widely shared that deviating from them would have called the writer's authority into question. Even so, it is clear that from a wide range of approaches to northern barbarism, an author would have chosen to highlight and emphasize those that would best suit his interests and *Tendenz*, and that in most cases he would have tried to match these representations to ones he imagined his audience shared. Hence it is easy to see how Cicero, in preparing his speech *Pro Fonteio*, had given

²⁴ This is the meaning behind, for instance, the Herodotean *eskhatiai*: *Historiae*, 3. 106, 3. 116. The fundamental study on the subject is Romm's *The Edges of the Earth*.

²⁵ An early example of idealized barbarians of the fringe would be the Homeric passages on Hippomolgoi and Abioi (*Ilias*, 13. 5) and the Aethiopians (*Ilias*, 1. 424–25, 23. 205; *Odyssea*, 1. 22–24, 4. 84); followed by many others, such as Ephorus's peaceful Scythians: *FGrH*, Ephorus fr. 42 in Strabo, *Geographica*, 7. 3. 9 (cf. Scymnus [*periegesis*] 852–55), with Strabo's correct reading of the Homeric account as idealizing. Thucydides, notably, seems to favour the primitivistic explanation over the climatic model: *Bellum Peloponnesicum*, 1. 5. 3–6. 6. Among the western and northern barbarians, however, the 'hard primitivism' (Lovejoy and Boas, *Primitivism*, p. 364 in the Germanic context) seems to be the norm, with the blessed Hyperboreans as the exception; Romm, *The Edges of the Earth*, pp. 60–67; Bridgman, *Hyperboreans*, pp. 10–17, 84–87.

²⁶ In the context of Germany, see O'Gorman, 'No Place Like Rome', p. 146; elsewhere and generally in antiquity, see Dauge, *Le Barbare*, pp. 124–25, 393–413; Chapman, *The Celts*, p. 110; Romm, *The Edges of the Earth*, pp. 54–57; Greg Woolf, *Becoming Roman: The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 56; Daryaei, 'The Changing "Image of the World"', passim. Often the dichotomy forms part of the discourse on nature-culture opposition: Herodotus, *Historiae*, 3. 23–25; Tacitus, *Germania*, 45.

good thought to ways of appealing to the common knowledge of the members of an equestrian jury concerning the Gallic character.²⁷

The use of differing approaches to describing the barbarians is only partly related to what we would most readily understand as distinct genres or, rather, registers of writing. Even in works that are often considered firmly belonging to a certain literary category — epic, for instance, or geographical writing — these modes of representing the foreigners are mixed and used sometimes on an ad hoc basis. Partly this is, of course, a factor of the modernity of our genre-related classifications: for ancient writers many modes of literature nowadays considered entirely separate were much more intimately associated. Tacitus is a fine example of such insufficiency of modern genre-categories in interpreting the nature of ancient literary pieces; both *Agricola* and *Germania* are many things at once.

The Original Occidentalism; Or, the Graeco-Roman Portrayal of Gauls

The Themes of Gallic Barbarism in Republican Sources

Although the Roman view concerning the Gauls had hardly developed to its late republican form in isolation from the contemporary Greek iconosphere that utilized an influential set of literary commonplaces concerning the Celts, no full historical exposition of the topoi involved will be attempted here. What shall be offered instead is a short survey of the basic themes and topics that comprised the Roman shared view of Gallic nature at the approximate period that led to the subjugation of the three provinces. The division of these attributes to three groups is simply dictated by convenience and has no bearing on the ancient structure of the iconosphere: for the Greeks and Romans, the natural *ferocia* and other typical attributes of the Celts formed an inextricable assemblage of traits that effectively delineated the northern barbarians.

The physical prowess and warlike attitude of the Celts was perhaps the earliest Greek topos to be formulated, and its basis in the experiences of both Greeks and Romans ensured that the theme was vigorously used in characterizing the northern peoples in both the sculptural and literary media, with particular attention being

²⁷ Cicero's introductions on how to disparage and abuse enemies at court: *De oratore*, 3. 53. 205; *De inventione rhetorica*, 2. 33; *Partitiones oratoriae*, 71; cf. *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, 2. 5, 3. 15. For the *equites* in juries, cf. Asconius Pedianus, *Commentarium in Ciceronis oratio contra Pisonem*, 78 c.

paid to their large stature and menacing countenance.²⁸ This formed the physical aspect of barbarous *ferocia*.²⁹ Another noteworthy physical trait often found in connection with the northerners is their fecundity, which made them worrisome long-term enemies.³⁰

Most of the perceived mental characteristics of the Celts were also attributed to foreign groups in any geographical direction, but the sheer range of moral and intellectual inadequacy of the northern peoples seems to form a strong narrative device in itself. Not only were they cruel and greedy, as most insufficiently civilized barbarians would be, but their inability to abide by any contract, whether human or divine, made them especially troublesome. Combined with their famous inconstancy it made them perfidious allies, while in conjunction with their disregard for proper religion it constituted a serious breach of humano-divine relations,³¹ exemplified by their widely perceived resort to human sacrifice.³² To all this physical

²⁸ Early notions of warlike character: Avienus, *Ora maritima*, 132–34 (based on a Massiliote or Carthaginian source from the mid-sixth century BCE); Plato, *Leges*, 637 d–e; Xenophon, *Hellenica*, 7. 1. 20–23, 7. 28–31; Aristoteles, *Ethica Nicomachea*, 1115 b, 1336 a, and *Politica*, 1269 b 26–27; Nicolaus Damascenus *FGrH*, 90 fr. 103 in Johannes Stobaeus, *Florilegium*, 4. 2. 25 (perhaps originally from Ephorus). The large bodies and martial prowess (often expressed through *immanis*): Callimachus, *Hymni*, 4. 161–90; Polybius, *Historiae*, 2. 27–30; Cicero, *De divinatione*, 1. 2, *Pro Fonteio*, 31 (mental *immanitas*), *Pro Marcello* 8. 2; *In Pisonem*, 81; *De provinciis consularibus*, 34. 3; Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum*, 1. 39. 1; Quintilianus [*Declamationes*], 3. 4; Appianus, *Celtica*, 1. 9; Dio Cassius, *Historia Romana*, 38. 35. 2, 47. 5, 49. 5.

²⁹ Perhaps the most comprehensive study of the whole theme of barbarian *ferocia/feritas* is that of Dauge, *Le Barbare*, discussing this fundamental characteristic throughout — the only handicap of the study is perhaps its overly rigid categorization (e.g. two spheres of *ferocia* and *vanitas*, p. 458), when iconospheres can hardly be expected to exist within such narrow confines. More specific to the Gallic *ferocia* in Livy is Christian Peyre, ‘Tite-Live et la “férocité” gauloise’, *Revue des études Latines*, 48 (1970), 277–96, with particular attention to the portrayal of Gauls as impious despoilers.

³⁰ Livius, *Ab urbe condita*, 38. 16. 13; Strabo, *Geographica*, 4. 1. 2, 4. 4. 3; Justinus, *Epitome*, 24. 4. 1, 25. 2. 8.

³¹ Greed: Polybius, *Historiae*, 2. 17. 3; Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum*, 6. 16. 5; Justinus, *Epitome*, 14. 7. Audacity: Polybius, *Historiae*, 2. 33. 2, 3. 79. 4; Livius, *Ab urbe condita*, 22. 2. 4, 38. 17. 7; Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum*, 3. 19. 6, and *Bellum civile*, 3. 59. 3.

³² Cicero, *Pro Balbo*, 43, *Pro Fonteio*, 30–31, *De republica*, 3. 15; Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum*, 5. 56 (also an indication of *discordia*), 6. 15–16; Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 5. 31. 3; Dionysius Halicarnassus, *Antiquitates Romanae*, 1. 38; Strabo, *Geographica*, 4. 4. 25, 7. 2. 3 (the latter among the Cimbri); Pomponius Mela, *De chorographia*, 3. 18–19; Plinius Maior, *Naturalis historia*, 30. 13; Plutarchus, *De superstitione*, 13. 171 c; Tertullianus, *Apologeticum*, 9; Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones*, 1. 21; as elsewhere, this topos came eventually to incorporate even the ultimate *nefas*

bravado and insolent attitude should be added their proneness to drink wine unmixed — always a sure sign of barbarity — and their poor tolerance of it,³³ though whether this constituted a physical or mental characteristic to the ancient observers is difficult to distinguish.

Socially, the mental *levitas/infirmetas* of northern barbarians is manifest in the social turmoil and infighting that also illustrate their venal audacity.³⁴ Combined with the utmost indicator of nonexistent civilization, the nomadic way of life, this social inadequacy lent credence to the idea of the barbarian as a semi-human, semi-beastly creature.³⁵ Nevertheless, the Gallic druids seemed to be able to control the shifting allegiances and brutal ways of their compatriots, though their creed was often described among the Romans in terms of deepest distrust.³⁶ Even when — under the influence of Greek ethnography — the druids were credited with some

of cannibalism: Plinius Maior, *Naturalis historia*, 30. 13 (Gauls and Britons), 7. 9 (of the peoples north of the Alps generally); Pausanias, *Graeciae descriptio*, 10. 22. 7; cannibalism as typical of extreme barbarism: Aristoteles, *Ethica Nicomachea*, 1148 b. Francisco Marco-Simón, 'Sacrificios humanos en la Celta Antigua: entre el estereotipo literario y la evidencia interna', *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte*, 1 (1999), 1–15, is a sober examination of both the literary/topical and archaeological aspects of the theme.

³³ Plato, *Leges*, 637 d–e; Polybius, *Historiae*, 2. 19 (cf. Justinus, *Epitome*, 14. 7–8); Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 5. 26. 2–3; Strabo, *Geographica*, 3. 4. 17; Pausanias, *Graeciae descriptio*, 10. 23. 13; even as late as Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 15. 12. 4 (though probably deriving from the Augustan Timagenes, it may be reinforced by Ammianus's own observations while in Gaul).

³⁴ *Levitas*: Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum*, 2. 1. 3, 3. 8. 3, 3. 10. 3, 4. 5. 1–3; Tacitus, *Germania*, 29. 4 (on Gauls). *Discordia*: Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum*, 6. 11. 2, 6. 16. 1–5.

³⁵ Nomadism: Aristoteles, *Politica*, 1256 a 30–b 7; nomadic peoples of the steppe: Strabo, *Geographica*, 7. 3. 7–9; Northern Italian Celts as nomads: Polybius, *Historiae*, 2. 14–35 (a topical passage); Germans and Danubian nomads: Seneca, *De providentia*, 4. 13–15 (with some moralizing admiration); the ensuing analogy with beasts: Seneca, *De ira*, 2. 15. 1. 4.

³⁶ The Greeks seem to have been more interested in the philosophical aspect of the druids, who also catered to a demand for 'barbarian wise men', just as the *gymnosophistai* of the Indians. The *loci classici* on the druids are Cicero, *De divinatione*, 1. 90. 1–1. 91. 3; Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum*, 6. 13–14, 6. 16, 6. 18, 6. 21; Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 5. 28. 6, 5. 31. 2–5; Strabo, *Geographica*, 4. 4. 4–5; Pomponius Mela, *De chorographia*, 3. 18–19; Lucanus, *De bello civili*, 1. 444–62 and *Scholia Bernensia super Lucanum*, in loc.; Plinius, *Naturalis historia*, 16. 249, 24. 103–04, 29. 52, 30. 13; Tacitus, *Historiae*, 2. 61. 4. 54, and *Annales*, 11. 2, 14. 30. 2; Dio Chrysostomus, *Orationes*, 49. 7; Suetonius, *Claudius*, 25; Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromateis*, 1. 15. 71; Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, 1. 25; Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae philosophorum*, 1. 1. 5; *SHA, Alexander Severus*, 60. 6, *Aurelianus*, 44. 4, *Carus, Carinus, Numerianus*, 14. 1–3; Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 15. 9. 4, 8; Ausonius, *Commemoratio professorum Burdigalensium*, 5. 7, 10. 26–30.

modicum of learning they could be claimed to use this to raise the warlike nature of Gallic nations.³⁷ Combined with the memory of the Gallic sack of Rome, all the aforementioned traits contributed to the so-called *metus Gallicus* that thrived even in the late republic.³⁸

It can be plausibly claimed that such vigorous and widely recognized patterns of thought, used for a long time to characterize the western/northern barbarians, actually constituted a distinct iconosphere of their own, and moreover one rivalling the eastern one, born from the traumas of the Persian wars.³⁹ Wedged between such extremes, the sheer symmetry of the barbarian fringe around the Mediterranean centre must have conveyed a certain sense of natural orderliness to the ancient Greek or Roman mind — a notion they shared with several ancient cultures. In essence, the vigorously budding ‘Orientalism’ of the Graeco-Roman eastern iconosphere was matched by just as strong ‘Occidentalism’ concerning the western inhabitants of the *oikoumene*, the development of which was considerably enfeebled when most of Western Europe came under the influence of Graeco-Roman literary culture.⁴⁰ The significance of the Celts of the fringe in defining the

³⁷ Pomponius Mela, *De chorographia*, 3. 19; Lucanus, *De bello civili*, 1. 457–62; Tacitus, *Historiae*, 4. 54.

³⁸ Examples of such *metus Gallicus* (a modern coinage not found in the texts) would include Claudius Quadrigarius fr. 1 Peter in Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*, 17. 2. 12, fr. 10 a Peter in Livius, *Ab urbe condita*, 6. 42. 3; Sallustius, *Bellum Iugurthinum*, 114. 1–2; Cicero *Epistulae ad Atticum*, 1. 19. 2 (cf. 2. 1. 11), *Pro Caecina*, 87–88, *De provinciis consularibus*, 33, *De republica*, 2. 11; Varro, *De vita populi Romani*, fr. 61 Riposati in Nonius Marcellus, *De compendiosa doctrina*, 498. 23; Appianus, *Bella civilia*, 2. 150; Justinus, *Epitome*, 38 fr. 152.

³⁹ The Greek ‘invention of the barbarian’ resulting from the Persian Wars is demonstrated excellently by Edith Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-definition through Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), pp. 57–100, although examining predominantly the evidence of classical tragedy. The dynamic is nevertheless distinct; among prose authors one need not look farther than Herodotus, *Historiae* 1. *praefatio*. Recent treatments of the subject include Peter J. Rhodes, ‘The Impact of the Persian Wars on Classical Greece’, in *Cultural Responses to the Persian Wars: Antiquity to the Third Millennium*, ed. by Emma Bridges, Edith Hall, and Peter J. Rhodes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 31–46, in a wide-ranging collection of articles most pertinent to the theme.

⁴⁰ Regrettably, the term ‘Occidentalism’ has already been reserved for another concept entirely, on which cf. James G. Carrier, *Occidentalism: Images of the West* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995). Though this is nicely complementary with Orientalism as articulated by Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978) and many others since, it does not really share its extensive literary history, reaching back all the way to Herodotus. Similarly, Herodotus constitutes one starting point for the characterization of western peoples, the ‘early Occidentalism’.

centre by way of oppositional pairings came thus to be significantly more marginal than the formidable repercussions of comparisons with the East.⁴¹

Free Gauls and Three Gauls: From Enemy Outside to Rebellious Subjects

However fierce the Gauls of the past had been, the final years of the republic saw these old enemies subdued, with all the propaganda and turmoil such a development may entail. The problem with the conquered provinces of Three Gauls was that they were relatively prone to rebellion — made all the more worrisome by the well-known fact of Gallic fecundity and the ensuing swarm of a population.⁴² For this early volatility the opinion in Rome — or at any rate, the shapers of opinion — seem to have had a suitable culprit at hand: the druids. Much of the written material from the first century of Roman occupation tends to emphasize the strong sway that the druidic order exercised over the Gauls at large. Although the philosophizing accounts of the Greek ethnographers had already cast the druids as an ‘order’ of teachers, sages, and judges,⁴³ it suited well the Roman writers seeking to explain the *levitas* of the Gallic provinces to underscore the secretive and disruptive nature of the druids, as well as the organized nature of their community.⁴⁴ These sentiments are frequently found among the authors, many of whom seem — not surprisingly — to have followed Caesar in their depictions of the druids.⁴⁵ The other natural explanation for the proneness of Gauls to rebel was already linked by

⁴¹ Cf. Chapman, *The Celts*, pp. 69, 95, 201–02.

⁴² See note 3 above.

⁴³ For instance, Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 15. 9. 8 seems to preserve the general tendency of Greek descriptions of the druids as a kind of barbarian equivalent to the philosophic schools. On Ammianus and Timagenes, cf. Sordi, ‘Timagene di Alessandria’, pp. 778–79.

⁴⁴ The perceived highly structured nature of the druidic organization is evidenced by, for instance, Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum*, 6. 13, which seems to postulate a kind of Gallic version of the pontifical *collegium* with the additional flourish of possible duels.

⁴⁵ An example of this is the similarity that Pomponius Mela’s account of the druids (*De chorographia*, 3. 18–19) bears to Caesar’s famous depiction (*Bellum Gallicum*, 6. 14). Dauge, *Le Barbare*, p. 190, considers Mela’s account a perceptive and well-researched one, without commenting on the highly probable derivation from the Caesarean narrative — other instances of which are given by Beatrix Günnewig, *Das Bild der Germanen und Britannier: Untersuchungen zur Sichtweise von fremden Völkern in antiker Literatur und moderner wissenschaftlicher Forschung* (Frankfurt: Lang, 1998), p. 130 nn. 54–55. Mela’s Germans, like many other barbarians in his work, are described in topical terms: e.g. *De chorographia*, 3. 25–28.

Caesar to their excitable character, the most typical feature of the Gallic psyche.⁴⁶ In this he simply resorted to a well-known ‘fact’ concerning the character of northerners — something that can certainly be considered a topos, though the notion was often explained in connection with climatic determinism, as well.⁴⁷

By Tacitus’s own time, the Gallic provinces seem to have been regarded as largely pacified, but the surviving portions of his historical works appear to preserve different sentiments regarding the threat the Gauls posed to the Romans. Tacitus states quite clearly that in his own time the Gauls had largely lost their martial glory.⁴⁸ Even so, when describing the Gallic unrest during the early empire, he manages to portray the unease and utter panic that such rebellious movements north of the Alps engendered in Rome.⁴⁹ In a similar vein the Gallic instigators of the late Julio-Claudian rebellions are characterized as typically savage and devious.⁵⁰ In *Agricola* and *Germania*, however, it is clearly the other, still free barbarians that are consistently described as enemies, while the Gauls are dismissed somewhat disparagingly as too softened by provincial subservience to pose any serious threat.⁵¹ Just as with Caesar before him, in Tacitus too we find the topical characteristics of northerners first and foremost used as a tool to boost the intentions of the author.⁵² At the same time, especially after the *clades Variana*, the focus of terrifying barbarity was clearly shifting towards the Germanies, while *metus Gallicus*

⁴⁶ Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum*, 7. 42; cf. Gardner, ‘The “Gallic Menace”’, p. 185.

⁴⁷ Such as Horatius, *Carmina*, 4. 5. 26–27, and *Epodi*, 16. 1–3 (both Gauls and Germans); Ovidius, *Epistulae ex Ponto*, 3. 4. 97 (Germany as *perfida*), and *Tristia*, 3. 12. 45–48 (as *rebellatrix*); Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum*, 7. 4. 2 (on Germans); Statius, *Silvae*, 1. 4. 89; Manilius, *Astronomica*, 1. 896–902, 3. 632–64; Tacitus, *Germania*, 30. 1. Some of the *ferocia* derives from the character of the land itself, so hostile to outsiders (cf. Tacitus, *Germania*, 2. 1, with the implication that only the indigenous Germans can prosper in their gloomy country).

⁴⁸ Tacitus, *Agricola*, 11. 4. Cf. note 51 below.

⁴⁹ The most expressive passage is the well-known Tacitus, *Historiae*, 4. 54.

⁵⁰ Tacitus, *Historiae*, 4. 13. 2 (Civilis), 4. 63. 1 (Civilis and Classicus).

⁵¹ Tacitus, *Agricola*, 11. 4 (cf. as early as Strabo, *Geographica*, 4. 4. 2–3). A similar development has enfeebled the Cherusci among the Germans (*Germania*, 36. 1). In addition to peace and luxury, a more benevolent clime could soften the northerners’ *ferocia*, as is stated by Livy about the Galatians (*Ab urbe condita*, 38. 17. 3).

⁵² This has been long since recognized concerning, for instance, Tacitus’s treatment of the Germanic *origo*: Norden, *Die germanische Urgeschichte*, pp. 46–47. Cf. also O’Gorman, ‘No Place Like Rome’, pp. 136–39, 143; Günnewig, *Das Bild der Germanen und Britannier*, p. 174.

was converted to something resembling *metus Germanicus*⁵³ — that is, if these terms are deemed meaningful at all, and we should not actually speak more generally of a *metus septentrionalium gentium*. Emperor Claudius, in his positive assessment on the state of Gaul when endorsing their *primores* to enter the Roman Senate, implies that the collaboration of the Gauls had begun to be seen as essential to the success of Roman policies towards the Germans.⁵⁴

It should perhaps be noted that it was only during the Roman rule that some sort of a Gallic identity most probably came into being. There had barely been any demonstrable sense of unity among the peoples of Gaul before the Roman conquest, but the self-descriptions of individuals as ‘Gauls’ during the imperial period point at least to a shared identity based on the province.⁵⁵ The development should be seen as another instance in which the cultural assimilation of a peripheral population entails the adoption of parts of its image as constructed by the centre; a clear indicator of such a process can be seen in the adoption of the Graeco-Roman mythologizing aetiologies by certain Gallic groups.⁵⁶

An interesting case, possibly pertinent to Gallic provincial identities as well, emerges in the third and fourth centuries CE through the characterizations of the Bacaudic movement. If nothing else, it illustrates well the technique of

⁵³ Although Günnewig, *Das Bild der Germanen und Britannier*, p. 80, seems correct in noting how the battle itself seems not to have affected the German image dramatically, it may have consolidated the hostility of the iconosphere — and was certainly used as an important point of reference by certain writers: Velleius Paterculus, *Historiae*, 2. 120. 1; Tacitus, *Annales*, 1. 10. 4, and *Germania*, 37. 3–5; and of course Suetonius, *Augustus* 23. 1–2.

⁵⁴ Tacitus, *Annales*, 11. 24 omits this direct assessment, but it appears in the epigraphic record, the famous bronze tables from Lyon: *ILS*, 212, col. 2.

⁵⁵ Chapman, *The Celts*, p. 34.

⁵⁶ Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum*, 1. 33: Aedui as *fratres consanguineique* of Romans, probably on the basis of some such appropriation endorsed by the Romans. The claim of Arverni is refuted by Lucanus, *De bello civili*, 1. 428, and is also mentioned by Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carmina*, 7. 139, and *Epistulae*, 7. 7. 2. By Ammianus’s time such aetiologies seem to have been better accepted (*Res gestae*, 15. 9. 5). The anonymous panegyrist of 311 is partly referring to this in Pan. Lat., v(viii). 2. 4. For a comparable development for the Turdetani of Hispania, see Asclepiades of Myrleia in Strabo, *Geographica*, 3. 139, 12. 573; elsewhere, e.g. for the Yi people of South China during the early dynastic period, see Poo, *Enemies of Civilization*, p. 34. Recently, the negotiation of identities by the conquered peoples has been discussed perhaps usefully by Greg Woolf, ‘Cruptorix and his Kind: Talking Ethnicity on the Middle Ground’, in *Ethnic Constructs in Antiquity: The Role of Power and Tradition*, ed. by Ton Derks and Nico Roymans, Amsterdam Archaeological Studies, 13 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009), pp. 207–17, though linking such appropriations to the rapidly aging concept of ‘ethnogenesis’ is far from necessary.

'rebarbarizing' dissenting provincial groups. The activities of these outlaw groups have been sufficiently studied⁵⁷ to confirm their long-standing existence over a geographically extensive area stretching from the Gallic and Alpine provinces to Spain. It appears that the disparate groups at different periods certainly did not form a coherently organized movement of rebellion as such — although there are some leaders named in our sources — but that rather the Bacaudae represent a move by certain segments of the society towards alternative subsistence patterns because of the widespread turmoil generated by the Transrhenane barbarians and Roman infighting.⁵⁸ That the Roman sources should brand these groups as

⁵⁷ Ramsay MacMullen, *Enemies of the Roman Order: Treason, Unrest, and Alienation in the Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), pp. 192–213; Edward A. Thompson, 'Peasant Revolts in Late Roman Gaul and Spain', *Past and Present*, 2 (1952), 11–23, esp. p. 17 (also defends the form *Bacaudae* pro *Bagaudae* on the grounds of manuscripts, p. 11); John F. Drinkwater, 'Peasants and Bagaudae in Roman Gaul', *Échos du monde classique*, 28 (1984), 349–71; Brent D. Shaw, 'Bandits in the Roman Empire', *Past and Present*, 105 (1984), 3–52, treats the theme of banditry on a more general level; Juan C. Sánchez León, *Les Sources de l'histoire des Bagaudes: traduction et commentaire*, ed. by Jacques Annequin and Evelyne Geny (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1996) on the sources. Note also Alain Chauvot, *Opinions romaines face aux barbares au IV^e siècle ap. J.-C.* (Paris: De Boccard, 1998), pp. 28–31, whose view of the movement as a sort of Fanonesque, spontaneous uprising of the suppressed peasantry is worth discussing, especially if read in conjunction with the treatment in Raymond Van Dam, *Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 25–56, drawing on the dynamics of local leadership in peripheral areas and suggesting a pattern of 'revolting in order to stay Roman', to which Woolf, *Becoming Roman*, p. 248, hints as well, though in a more cultural sense. Sánchez León, *Les Sources de l'histoire des Bagaudes*, p. 14, doubts the existence of any clear aims.

⁵⁸ Similarities between the Bacaudic 'strategy' and that of the 'barbarians' were first noted among modern scholars by Camille Jullian, *Histoire de la Gaule*, 8 vols (Paris: Hachette, 1920–26), VII, 54. This would approximate the Bacaudae quite nicely with the 'social bandits' of Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Bandits* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1969), p. 17. Jordanes, *Getica*, 36. 191 has Armoricans fighting for Aetius in the Catalaunian fields, which could imply an opportunistic, mercenary way of life for the provincials in the manner of barbarians; see also the *Gallic Chronicle of 452*, 100, 112; Prosper Aquitanus, *Chronicon*, s.a. 1288, 1310; Jordanes, *Romana*, 334; Gregorius Turonensis, *Historia Francorum*, 2. 8; cf. Thompson, 'Peasant Revolts', p. 20; Van Dam, *Leadership and Community*, p. 48. A passage from the panegyric of 289 by Mamertinus (Pan. Lat., x(ii). 4. 3, discussed by Chauvot, *Opinions romaines*, pp. 29, 43) may be relevant, as well: 'cum hostem barbarum suorum cultorum rusticus vastator imitatus est' (when the rustic imitates the barbarian foe, laying waste to his associated farmers). Partly the sentence alludes to a more general narrative device of *latrocinium* (cf. a similar figure of speech in Livy's *Periochae*, 52 on Viriathus), but the distinguishing feature is the *imitatio* of the barbarian *hostes* by the provincials. Salvian (*De gubernatione Dei*, 5. 25–26) dispenses with the theme of imitation and seems to equate Bacaudae with barbarians, while observing that they had forfeited their *Romanitas* in the face of government oppression.

brigand-outlaws 'gone barbarian', and, indeed, paint them as a barbarian enemy within the realm, is not particularly surprising.⁵⁹ More so might be the widespread silence of our sources on the whole matter: Ammianus keeps his quiet entirely, and even Mamertinus all but passes over the victory (Pan. Lat., x(ii). 4. 4, 6. 1). This has been interpreted as anxiety of the propertied classes over such a distressing and unmanageable change among the peasantry.⁶⁰

It seems that certain *gentes* inside the empire never entirely lost their barbarian character, as was the case with the Isaurians.⁶¹ Though Gauls as a whole should not be seen as such a *gens*, groups such as the Bacaudae could be considered as re-entering the barbarian category when their antagonism with the 'Roman' way of life became particularly poignant. Actually, both with the Isaurians and the Bacaudae the distinction may have much to do with their perceived way of life —

⁵⁹ As Mamertinus's address to Emperor Maximian betrays, the *imitatio* of barbarians worried the few authors discussing the Bacaudae; Pan. Lat., x(ii). 4. 3; cf. Herodian on the revolt of Mater-nus at the end of the second century CE (Herodianus, *Ab excessu divi Marci*, 1. 10. 3, 11. 5; cf. *SHA, Pescennius Niger*, 3. 3–8, *Commodus*, 16. 2). Uneasiness is also communicated by *De rebus bellicis*, 2. 3; Orosius, *Historia adversus paganos*, 7. 41. 7; and Zosimus, *Historia nova*, 6. 5. 3. Certain authors seem to envision the Bacaudae as wishing to detach themselves entirely from the Roman state (*Chronica Minora*, 1, p. 660; Johannes Antiochenus, fr. 201. 3; perhaps Salvianus, *De gubernatione Dei*, 5. 22–23 as well, paralleling Orosius), but actually the brigands may rather have been trying to detach from the urban society and sedentary subsistence that seemed unsustainable at the time — and in this they probably copied the lifestyle of the freebooting barbarians. This is supported by the late Gallic comedy *Querolus* (17. 15, in *Aulularia, sive Querolus: Theodosiani aevi comoedia Rutilio dedicata*, ed. by Rudolf Peiper (Leipzig: Teubner, 1875), p. 16), which refers to living by *iure gentium* along the Loire, *ibi totum licet*, and even dispensing capital punishment beneath the oaks — which might tentatively be interpreted as a residual folk-memory of druidic customs, as proposed by Marco-Simón, 'Sacrificios humanos en la Céltica Antigua', p. 3 n. 16. If reversion to such patterns had come to the knowledge of the Gallic aristocracy, it could well be argued that the movement of the peasantry was seen as returning to barbarism — which the panegyrist members of the elite prided their *civitates* to have shed so long ago: Pan. Lat., v(viii). 2. 4; cf. also Woolf, *Becoming Roman*, pp. 73–75, 241–42.

⁶⁰ Thompson, 'Peasant Revolts', pp. 11–12; Chauvot, *Opinions romaines*, p. 43. This mentality is partly expressed by Ulpian (in *Digesta*, 1. 18. 13). It has also been noted that, as always, the passing of increasingly strict legislation by the state effectively created much of the outlawry: MacMullen, *Enemies of the Roman Order*, p. 210.

⁶¹ As seems to be implied by *SHA, Tyranni triginta*, 26. 6, *Probus*, 16. 5; Marcellinus comes, *Annales*, s.a. 441; *Laterculus Veronensis*, 13. 44 (*Notitia dignitatum: accedunt notitia urbis Constantinopolitanae et Laterculi provinciarum*, ed. by Otto Seeck (Berlin: Weidmann, 1876), p. 252). On Isaurians, including their image and representations, see Karl Feld, *Barbarische Bürger: die Isaurier und das Römische Reich* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005). Cf. Amory, *People and Identity*, p. 21.

brigandage. All these points notwithstanding, the explanatory effect of northern climate was often invoked as ancient authors tried to define the traits perceived characteristic to the northern barbarians.⁶² So it could be argued that even when the Gallic provinces had long been the bulwark of Rome against the ‘free barbarians’, as well as a tremendous source of revenue and manpower, any unrest in the area still appeared quite disturbing to Roman mentalities. No amount of *humanitas* and development invested in Gaul could make the area entirely trustworthy, and while the true barbarian ferociousness could no longer be applied to its inhabitants, they seem to have been perceived as susceptible to relapses of latent barbarism, should the ‘Germanic’ influence again obtain foothold in the Gallic provinces.

Significant Other: Roman Depictions of the Germanic Peoples

Defining Germans, Defining Borders: The Mental Geography of Contact

As has already been noted, the distinction between Gauls and Germans was a relatively late development and largely came about because of the Roman (and even more narrowly, Caesarean) need to establish clear lines of demarcation in the northern lands that had gained prominence in mental geographies of the age. The implications of the belatedness of this ethnographic distinction are quite important. Several scholars have treated the invasion of the Cimbri and Teutones as a self-evidently Germanic migration, not only in tracing the early history of the so-called ‘Germanic’ tribes, but more inexplicably also in connection with Roman reflections on the significance of the said population movement.⁶³ Such a liberal use of ethnic labels that are essentially later and ideologically charged constructions

⁶² Günnewig, *Das Bild der Germanen und Britannier*, pp. 209–11.

⁶³ A passable example of this is Henry H. Howorth, ‘The Ethnology of Germany, part II: The Germans of Caesar’, *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, 7 (1878), 211–32 (p. 211) (admittedly on Ariovistus’s movements, but nevertheless assuming that the dynamic and nature of the later ‘migrations’ were similar). Later examples of uncritical use of ethnic labels would include David Ellis Evans, ‘Celts and Germans’, *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 19 (1982), 230–55 (p. 239) and even Peter Heather, *Goths and Romans 332–489* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp. 324–25. Cf. also Gardner, ‘The “Gallic Menace”’, p. 181. It should be noted, additionally, that the Cimbri and Teutones did not absorb all the traits of ferociousness traditionally attributed to them until comparatively late — thus e.g. Plutarch (*Marius*, 11), obviously, is not a statement pertaining to the Marian period, but only charts the Roman notions of Plutarch’s time.

has been discouraged by many modern studies, and would be rather injudicious.⁶⁴ On the other hand, focusing on problems of ethnic nomenclature in the context of classical literature can hardly end up anywhere else than advising caution in their use, while still going on using them as 'convenient labels'. Hence, sticking with the names used by the sources would seem the most sensible choice of a general policy.

In any case there seems to have been genuine uncertainty among the Mediterranean authors of the composition of these groups of people. The Greeks did not distinguish between the Celts and the Germans, the simple reason for this being that there was no need for them to construct such a distinction. Even though Posidonius (*FGrH*, 87 fr. 22 in Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae*, 4. 39 153E) mentions the Germans, there is no sense that they would be a population group of great consequence.⁶⁵ In this his Germans resemble some of the tribes outlying the Scythians in Herodotus, presented as names only — it is, indeed, possible that Posidonius was purposefully writing a *Keltikos logos* to match Herodotus's *Skythikos logos*. Perhaps similar Greek sources influenced Cassius Dio's surprising view that the *Germanoi* are but a sub-group of the *Keltoi*⁶⁶ — certainly at that date the Germans should by most expectations have already asserted themselves as an important, even the most important, group of northern barbarians in the imperial imagination. For Strabo (*Geographica*, 4. 4. 2) the Celts and Germans in the area of the Rhine are alike and akin (*emphereis, syngeneis*), effectively using both the Posidonian idea of similarity and Caesar's claim of shared ancestry (of the Belgae). It seems relatively safe to surmise that as a collective name, *Germani* is less probably a creation of the groups so labelled, than a relatively new coinage either by the Romans or the Gauls informing them.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Goffart's critique (*Barbarian Tides*) of projecting ethnicities to antiquity is among the more polemic ones, whereas Amory (*People and Identity*, p. xvii) represents a relatively balanced and cautious modern approach.

⁶⁵ Cf. Chapman, *The Celts*, pp. 39–40; Günnewig, *Das Bild der Germanen und Britannier*, pp. 25–26.

⁶⁶ Dio Cassius, *Historia Romana*, 53. 12. 6, 71. 3. 2; cf. also Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 5. 4. 32; Dionysius Halicarnassus, *Antiquitates Romanae*, 14. 1. 2.

⁶⁷ This seems to be borne out by Tacitus, *Germania*, 2, which has merited some discussion; see e.g. John H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, 'Gens into regnum: The Vandals', in *Regna and Gentes: The Relationship between Late Antique and Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in the Transformation of the Roman World*, ed. by Hans-Werner Goetz; Jörg Jarnut, and Walter Pohl (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp. 55–83 (p. 59); Hirstein, *Tacitus' 'Germania'*, pp. 187–98 with relevant bibliography; Colin Wells, 'Celts and Germans in the Rhineland', in *The Celtic World*, ed. by Miranda J. Green (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 603–20 (p. 606).

While the Caesarean contribution to the introduction of *Germania* as a Roman category of ideation is undeniable in importance, it is Tacitus who should be regarded as the most fundamental creator of Germans and their native land.⁶⁸ Just as in Caesar, the Germans of Tacitus pose a formidable threat to the security of the Gallic provinces,⁶⁹ but while Caesar had been mostly preoccupied by defining the two groups with regard to each other and the utility of both to the Romans, Tacitus is understood to write first and foremost about what he believed the Romans should be, the main role of Germans being to provide him with a suitable template for his moralizing discourse. In practice, he obtains this by combining emotional, ethnographic, and idealizing registers with considerable skill, all the while keeping in mind what his readers knew about the Germans, and what he thought they should learn. As such, and especially when combined as evidence with his historical works, Tacitus's *Germania* provides a fascinating and multilayered example of the nature of the Roman imperial iconosphere on Germans, with enough traditional material to enable meaningful comparisons with earlier and later depictions.

Motifs on the Move? The German Iconosphere in Roman Literature

In Livy's early books — just as in the response of the Aetolians to a Roman embassy in Trogus/Justin — the Gauls of the past were still presented as the great criterion of a nation's virtue and divine favour.⁷⁰ During the later republic, however, the invasion of Cimbri and Teutones seems to have somewhat usurped this position from the earlier conflict; in Caesar we see the 'Gallic menace' purposefully giving way to a 'German menace' in many places,⁷¹ and among other authors, as well, a transfer

⁶⁸ For instance O'Gorman, 'No Place Like Rome', pp. 136–37. It has to be noted, however, that the role of Tacitus's pre-Renaissance *Nachleben* in shaping the image of the Germanies was decidedly more feeble than Caesar's, who was read and used vigorously, for instance by Aimoin de Fleury (early eleventh century) for his *Historia Francorum* (Patrologia Latina, ed. by J.-P. Migne and others (Paris, 1844–64), 139, cols 629, 632–34).

⁶⁹ Tacitus, *Historiae*, 4. 73. 3 — the rich lands of Gaul could still be seen as a source of competition between the Romans and Germans, just as in Caesar's time: *Bellum Gallicum*, 1. 33. 3–4, cf. 1. 40. 5–11.

⁷⁰ Livius, *Ab urbe condita*, 5. 36. 6; Justinus, *Epitome*, 24. 5. 6, 28. 2. 4–7, paralleling Polybius, *Historiae*, 2. 7, 13. 5–7, 20. 6–10, 31. 7–8, 35. 9–10, the overall tone of which may have influenced Trogus.

⁷¹ Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum*, 1. 33, 1. 40, 2. 30, 4. 16. Ariovistus is characterized by a very traditional assemblage of adjectives formerly applied to Gauls (1. 31. 13). Gardner, 'The "Gallic

seems to be taking place. Strabo, for instance, indicates the ferociousness of the Belgae by stating that they were the only ones able to withstand the Cimbric invasion (*Geographica*, 4. 4. 3). Naturally Caesar sought to capitalize on this tendency, and thus in *Bellum Gallicum* we find him strongly implying that the Cimbri and Teutones were Germans (1. 33), as, indeed, they should be following his rigorous ethnically articulated but propagandistically motivated division along the Rhine.⁷² The Belgae, for their part, are also depicted by Caesar as the most formidable foes among the peoples of Gaul — and this is partly because of their great affinity with the Germans.⁷³ Whereas the large, powerful Gallic bodies had been the source of such disquiet in the republican Roman mind, Caesar's constant emphasis on the difference between the Gauls and Germans serves as a vehicle through which the barbarian physical prowess and skill in arms was transferred to the Germans.⁷⁴ In Caesar we see the culturally shared view concerning the northern barbarians exploited and manipulated as never before⁷⁵ — he constructs a clear-cut difference to replace the former ambiguity: expressions like 'Germani multum ab hac consuetudine differunt' (the Germans differ much from this habit: *Bellum Gallicum* 6. 21. 1) are descriptive of this aim. The ethnographic elements of Caesar's descriptions are echoed (probably directly) by Mela (*De chorographia*, 3. 26). Not only is the *immanitas* both a physical and mental characteristic, but we see the climatic theme taken up as well.

Menace", pp. 184, 186, notes correctly how Caesar seems to employ the excuse of 'German menace' particularly at times when the area of his operations is extended; cf. also Wolfram, *The Roman Empire*, p. 36, on Caesar's justifications of not really trying to conquer Germany, which is portrayed as 'the other world'.

⁷² That the ethnic and cultural aspects of this division along the Rhine are largely constructed by Caesar is widely accepted; cf. Wells, 'Celts and Germans', p. 606.

⁷³ Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum*, 2. 3, 2. 4, (Hirtius) 8. 25; cf. Tacitus, *Germania*, 28. 4; Günnewig, *Das Bild der Germanen und Britannier*, p. 60.

⁷⁴ Such as in Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum*, 1. 39, which in an earlier context would immediately suggest a specifically Gallic foe. Similarly, Josephus's characterization of Germans (*Bellum Judaicum*, 7. 4. 2. 75–78) is exceedingly similar to the famous Posidonian-Strabonian passage on Celts, Strabo, *Geographica*, 4. 4. 2.

⁷⁵ Hence, for instance, there is in the first book a constant emphasis of Germans crossing the Rhine (*Bellum Gallicum*, 1. 31, 1. 33, 1. 37, 1. 43, 1. 44, 1. 53), thus entering the orbit of Roman affairs and their immediate 'safety zone' of Gaul — itself in constant turmoil ready to boil over. Cf. Gardner, "The 'Gallic Menace'", p. 182.

For the Greeks and republican Romans, the Gauls had constituted 'latter-day Titans', quasi-monstrous opponents of the theandric relationship.⁷⁶ Like the mythical 'sons of the Earth', the northern barbarians were physically frightening and similarly dominated by heavy, stultifying elements.⁷⁷ This portrayal, however, seems to constantly drift towards the Germans as the imperial period progresses; Velleius Paterculus's scene of fertile, powerful Chauci having to kneel before the emperor certainly serves as a continuation of the earlier (similarly panegyric) theme, and Diodorus, already, was quite explicit in comparing Germans to the Giants.⁷⁸ Interestingly, there seems to be some evidence that even during the later imperial period the Gigantomachic theme could have been applied not only to the Germans, but to the Gallic rebels as well. For although quite a number of emperors cultivated allusions to Hercules, there may be some correspondence between Maximian's *agnomen* Herculus and his urgent mission to pacify Gaul with its rampaging Bacaudae. This may be due to a combination of the perceived 'barbarian'

⁷⁶ 'Latter-day Titans': Callimachus, *Hymni*, 4. 174. Cf. Pausanias, *Graeciae descriptio*, 10. 22. 7, likening the alleged cannibalism of the Celts to that of the Cyclopes. The term 'theandric' is used in the context of barbarian *impietas* by Dauge, *Le Barbare*, pp. 426, 429; cf. also pp. 641–42. It is easy to see how older Greek notions on the nature of the Giants and Titans (e.g. *Odyssey*, 7. 59) could be adapted to fit the western barbarians. Overcoming enemies of this sort effectively re-created the cosmic order that was first established in the original Titanomachy.

⁷⁷ Dauge, *Le Barbare*, pp. 613–14, 634–37.

⁷⁸ Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 37. 1. 5; Velleius Paterculus, *Historiae*, 2. 106. As pictorial evidence of the giganto-/barbaromachic continuity at the northern fringe we have the so-called *Gigantensäule* or Jupiter-columns (general discussion with bibliography: Greg Woolf, 'Representation as Cult: The Case of the Jupiter Columns', in *Religion in den germanischen Provinzen Roms*, ed. by Wolfgang Spickermann, Hubert Cancik, and Jörg Rüpke (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), pp. 116–34). Though occasionally described as 'wholly alien to the classical iconography' (Wells, 'Celts and Germans', p. 617), their models could be argued to lie in the traditional motif of a triumphant cavalryman trampling an abject barbarian, a genre of depiction strongly influenced by Pergamene galatomachic sculptures imitating the iconography of Alexander and the Epigoni: Jerome J. Pollitt, *Art in the Hellenistic Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 83–97; Peter J. Holliday, 'Celtomachia: The Representation of Battles with Gauls on Etruscan Funerary Urns', *Etruscan Studies*, 1 (1994), 23–45 (pp. 26–27, 30–41); Ann Kuttner, 'Republican Rome Looks at Pergamon', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 97 (1995), 157–78 (pp. 169–70); Andrew F. Stewart, *Attalos, Athens, and the Akropolis: The Pergamene 'Little Barbarians' and their Roman and Renaissance Legacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 220–36. If these monuments could be seen as echoing barbaromachic imagery otherwise quite prevalent in the imperial literature, their concentration in the Germanic provinces could be explained; cf. Woolf, *Becoming Roman*, pp. 75–76.

nature of the threat, and the reflection of the mythological tradition of Hercules bringing the Gallic autocrats to heel.⁷⁹ At any rate, Mamertinus twice refers to the Emperor's role as a Herculean pacifier, the first time just before describing the havoc wreaked by the Gallic rebels.⁸⁰ Nazarius's comparison of the Frankish kings Ascaricus and Merogaisus to the twin serpents vanquished by Hercules⁸¹ should perhaps be seen as another instance of this panegyristic topos of the Emperor symbolically duplicating the culture hero — at least for the purposes of flattery. A considerably earlier instance of seeing the fight against northern barbarians — Germans in particular — as elemental to the imperial person and authority may lie behind Vitellius's promotion of the name *Germanicus* as part of the dynastic imperial nomenclature, replacing the earlier *Caesar* and being granted to his son as well.⁸²

The mental characteristics seem to have been similarly treated. Caesar clearly desires to construct a difference between the Gauls and Germans, as noted above; this is acquired partly through depicting the Germanic religion only as primitive nature worship, in contrast with the theocracy of the druids.⁸³ Tacitus is much more straightforward in terms of religion; certainly the Germans practise a faulty and deficient form of religion,⁸⁴ but he has no need to prove their particular primitivism through it — hence there are priests as well.⁸⁵ Rather the religion, too, is subjected to the warlike character of the Germans (*Germania*, 40. 3). Otherwise

⁷⁹ This theme is cleverly handled by Lucian in *Hercules*, 2, where he still uses the topical Gallic disdain for the Greek gods and combines it with their resentment felt towards Hercules.

⁸⁰ Pan. Lat., x(ii). 4. 2, xi(iii). 3. 4–6; cf. 4. 2. Of course it needs to be admitted that the imperial *agnomen* itself would have lent the allusions to the panegyrist with no particular complications. For 'Théarcléisme romain', see Dauge, *Le Barbare*, e.g. pp. 33, 542.

⁸¹ Pan. Lat., iv(x). 16. 5, addressed to Constantine.

⁸² Tacitus, *Historiae*, 2. 59. 3; Suetonius, *Vitellius*, 8. 2; Dio Cassius, *Historia Romana*, 65. 1. 2 (Zonaras, *Epitome*, 11. 16). On the dynastic ambitions of Vitellius and his distancing himself from the Julio-Claudians, see Gwyn Morgan, 'An Heir of Tragedy: Tacitus *Historiae* 2.59.3', *CPh*, 86 (1991), 138–43.

⁸³ The Germanic *religio*: Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum*, 6. 21; the druidic cult: *ibid.*, 6. 13–14, 6. 16.

⁸⁴ Purposefully used depictions would include *Annales*, 1. 61. 3; *Germania*, 39. 2, 40. 3. Similarly, aniconic worship and sacredness of groves should be seen as well-established topoi when describing primitive groups: Tacitus, *Germania*, 9; cf. Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 22. 9. 4; Lucanus, *De bello civili*, 3. 413; Curtius Rufus, *Historiae Alexandri Magni*, 8. 9. 34 (on Indians); Arrianus, *Indica*, 7. 2; Procopius, *De bello Gothico*, 4. 3. 14; Gregorius Turonensis, *Historia Francorum*, 2. 10.

⁸⁵ Priests: Tacitus, *Germania*, 7, 10, 11, 40, 43; prophetesses: *ibid.*, 8.

— certain moralistic points aside — Tacitus does not elaborate the mental characteristics of the Germans past the breaking-point of his readers' credulity: he seems to take it for granted that among the Germans wiliness and guile are common traits.⁸⁶

Similarly the German ferociousness seems to have become proverbial: *immanis* and *ferus/feritas* seem to constitute genuine topoi,⁸⁷ while the Germanic rapacity seems to be mostly noted by Greek authors — possibly by analogy with the well-known Gallic characteristic.⁸⁸ Even *gentes* formerly in alliance with the Romans were recrafted as *feroces* if they happened to rebel: the case of the Batavians is well known,⁸⁹ as is that of the vacillating ally-king Maroboduus.⁹⁰ Such instances enabled the transfer of the motif of *perfidia* to apply to the Germans as well.⁹¹ Through such confrontations, this readiness to fight for freedom, and the consequent *libertas* of nearly all Germans, seems to emerge as one distinguishing factor

⁸⁶ Tacitus, *Germania*, 30 on the typically German guile of the Chatti (a trait derived partly from their environment); yet, curiously, the Germans as a whole are described as a 'gens non astuta nec callida' (ibid., 22). This is probably meant to contrast their openness towards each other with the machinations of the Roman elite in an obviously moralizing tone and should be seen as quite separate from their *ratio* and *sollertia* when dealing with their enemies.

⁸⁷ *Feritas*: Cicero, *De republica*, 1. 37. 153; Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum*, 1. 31. 5, 1. 33. 4, 2. 4. 8, 2. 15. 5; Velleius Paterculus, *Historiae*, 2. 106. 2 (cf. 2. 108. 2; 2. 119. 5); Pomponius Mela, *De chorographia*, 3. 26; Seneca, *De ira*, 2. 15; Suetonius, *Caesar*, 24. 3; Hieronymus, *Epistulae*, 60. 54. 4; for the expression *immanis*, see e.g. Cicero, *In Pisonem*, 81, and *De divinatione*, 1. 2; Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum*, 4. 1. 9; Frontinus, *Strategemata*, 1. 1. 8; Florus, *Epitome*, 1. 45. 12 (on Gauls, Germans, and Britons together); Pan. Lat., vi(vii). 12. 1; Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 16. 12. 24, 16. 12. 36, 17. 1. 13, 26. 5. 7, 28. 5. 9, 31. 7. 8.

⁸⁸ Dio Cassius, *Historia Romana*, 56. 22. 3 (cf. 56. 21. 4); Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum*, 7. 4. 2. Tacitus, on the other hand, stresses in many instances the frugal material culture of the Germans and the absence of venality and avarice among them: e.g. *Germania*, 5 concerning gold and silver. This forms an integral part of his moralizing cultural discourse (O'Gorman, 'No Place Like Rome', p. 147) and is in significant contrast to the subjugated Britons in *Agricola*, 21, who are deprived of their former liberty, yet deceived into believing the material advantages of their slavery to be *humanitas* (cf. *Agricola*, 30, *Annales*, 12. 33. 2, *Historiae*, 4. 17. 2). A contrary position seems to have been occupied by Pliny (*Naturalis historia*, 16. 4). To him the reluctance of backward barbarians to be subjected to the Roman civilizing influence appears as entirely irrational, deserving the punishing conditions.

⁸⁹ Tacitus, *Historiae*, 1. 59. 1, 2. 17. 2, 4. 14. 2, 4. 19. 1; the negative characteristics seem to stem from their consanguinity with the Transrhene Germans (ibid., 4. 14. 4).

⁹⁰ The description of Velleius Paterculus seems to recognize both Maroboduus's abilities and his barbaric potential to be serious trouble; *Historiae*, 1. 108. 2.

⁹¹ German *perfidia*: Ovidius, *Epistulae ex Ponto*, 3. 4. 97; Martialis, *Epigrammata*, 7. 7. 1–6.

between the descriptions of Gauls and Germans; the Gauls had perhaps once possessed it, but in losing their former *ferocia* had lost their *libertas* as well.⁹² Such a view is only to be expected, since there obviously was a need among the Romans to account for their failures to subjugate the Transrhene groups.

Similarly, the cultural traits of the two emerging northern barbarian groups are described in related, if not identical, terms. Already Eduard Norden noted the parallels between the human sacrifice of the Cimbri as described in Strabo (*Geographica*, 7. 2. 3) and the Gallic ritual narrated by Diodorus (*Bibliotheca historica*, 5. 31. 3).⁹³ Both descriptions may stem from a Posidonian source pertaining to his undifferentiated northern Celt-Germans, but just as likely the obvious topical character of the passages reveals a genuinely undifferentiated tradition of 'common knowledge' concerning the custom of barbarian human sacrifice. The topos of secretive and harmful religious figures, so memorably manifest in the druids of Roman literature, may well colour such prophetic figures among the Germans as Veleda of the Bructeri and her rather more shadowy successor Ganna.⁹⁴ Such *loci* are in themselves a powerful argument against using Caesar's primitivistic portrayal of Germanic religion as a source of historical 'facts'. Another interesting similarity between the Gauls of Caesar and the Germans of Tacitus in the field of religion is surely their shared reverence for the god Mercury, but whether this tells more of the uniformity of the *interpretatio Romana* or the northern ethnographic iconosphere is debatable.⁹⁵

In both physical and mental traits the Germanic character could be explained just as definitely as that of the Gauls by their climatic environment — all the more

⁹² The causal relationship between these two characteristics is a many-faceted question. The freedom of the northern peoples (as a general and, indeed, indistinct group): Aristoteles, *Politica*, 1327 b 23–27. On the Germanic *libertas*: Seneca, *De ira*, 2. 15. 1. 4 (the *liberae gentes* are *iracundissimae*, like Scythians and Germans); Martialis, *Spectacula*, 3. 1–9; Tacitus, *Germania*, 37. 3. Gauls enslaved by Romans: Strabo, *Geographica*, 4. 4. 2–3.

⁹³ Norden, *Die germanische Urgeschichte*, p. 123. The Strabonian description is considered topical in character by Günnewig, *Das Bild der Germanen und Britannier*, p. 128.

⁹⁴ Veleda: Tacitus, *Historiae*, 4. 61. 2; Ganna: Dio Cassius, *Historia Romana*, 67. 5. 3. From Dio it can be seen that peoples on the right bank of the Rhine could still appear as living in *Keltikē* for a Greek writer of the late second century; cf. *ibid.*, 71. 3. 2 on the Marcomanni and Quadi, as well as Arrian (*Anabasis*, 1. 3. 1–2) articulating this very clearly at the Danubian frontier. A third Germanic priestess is included among Vitellius's retinue by Suetonius, with the undertone of emphasizing his religious inadequacy (Suetonius, *Vitellius*, 14. 5: 'vaticinante Chatta muliere'); apparently the northern fringe could highlight the defects of those Romans that were inherently apt to succumb to impiety.

⁹⁵ Caesar, *Bellum Gallicum*, 6. 17. 1, while Tacitus, *Germania*, 9. 1 uses precisely the same words.

so as climatically conditioned depictions proved to be both influential and long-lasting, from Plato to Agathias and much beyond.⁹⁶ The sub-/quasi-human status of barbarians, their beastly nature, was a theme that never vanished from the attitude of the Romans in defining certain types of barbarians.⁹⁷ This theme was particularly often resorted to when nomadic barbarians were described.⁹⁸ The Gauls had been described like this, and similarly certain population groups of Germany were considered particularly fierce because of their nomadic way of life. On the other hand, an important distinction could be made by stressing the non-nomadic nature of a barbarian group, as Agathias does when writing on Franks (*Historiae*, 1. 2). Through this, a polemical contrast is made between the Franks and the other northern barbarians: in effect, the ability of Franks to conform to the Roman cultural paradigm is stressed.⁹⁹

It seems that, though some of the former themes of primitivism certainly came to reside among the Germanic descriptions firmly, if only to explain their continuing freedom, the most outright exoticism was directed towards the British Isles instead. The very location of Britain, Ireland, and the islands beyond made them so liminal to the rest of the *oikoumene* as to be almost otherworldly.¹⁰⁰ While

⁹⁶ Plato, *Res publica*, 435 c; Agathias, *Historiae*, 1. 19. On the later influence of the theme, see Johnson, 'Of Differing Ages and Climes'.

⁹⁷ Just some examples would include Vitruvius, *De architectura*, 6. 1. 3; Velleius Paterculus, *Historiae*, 2. 117. 3; Quintilianus [*Declamationes*], 3. 4. 3; Prudentius, *Contra Symmachum*, 2. 816–19; Jordanes, *Getica*, 122.

⁹⁸ It has also been rightly noted (Günnewig, *Das Bild der Germanen und Britannier*, p. 123) that the Scythians were the 'klassischen Nomaden des Altertums' — thus it is almost inevitable that we see elements of Scythian ethnography (especially as reinforced by Herodotus's authority) turning up in most descriptions of nomadic barbarians. Cf. Romm, *The Edges of the Earth*, pp. 45–47.

⁹⁹ Cameron, 'Agathias on the Early Merovingians', pp. 112–13.

¹⁰⁰ The position of Britain outside the rest of the world (*alius orbis*) is well evidenced, at least as a rhetorical figure: Catullus, *Carmen*, 11. 9–12; Velleius Paterculus, *Historiae*, 2. 46. 1; Martial, *Epigrammata*, 10. 44. 1–2; Aelius Aristides, *Orationes*, xxvi, ed. by Wilhelm Dindorf (Berlin: Weidmann, 1829), p. 28; Dio Cassius, *Historia Romana*, 39. 50. 3; *Anthologia Latina*, 419. 4; *SHA, Hadrianus*, 16. 3; Pan. Lat., vi(vii). 9. 5 portrays Britain as *materies gloriae* for Constantius Chlorus. Cf. Romm, *The Edges of the Earth*, pp. 123, 140; O'Gorman, 'No Place Like Rome', p. 138 (on the ocean's effect on the descriptions of Germany); Günnewig, *Das Bild der Germanen und Britannier*, p. 277. It is no wonder, then, that some golden-age topoi could be attributed to the inhabitants of the isles in the Ocean: Asclepiades in Plutarchus [*Placita philosophorum*] 5. 30 (911); cf. a Hyperborean connection with Britain (or some other 'island beyond the Celtic parts') by Hecataeus of Abdera in Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 2. 47; Tacitus *Dialogus de oratoribus*, 17. In Germanic ethnographies the ocean's temporally distancing, archaizing influence could be seen

Germany did draw some exoticism from the proximity of the mythically charged Ocean, the Romans nevertheless became so well informed on Germanic matters that ethnographic wonder-writing was shifted on the continent beyond the Germans — as is evidenced even in Tacitus.¹⁰¹ Lastly, an interesting exception from the general correspondence should be noted among the social or cultural traits ascribed to the Gauls and Germans. Whereas the Gauls had been widely considered substandard in their sexual *mores* as well,¹⁰² there are but few instances of such descriptions concerning the Germans, while Tacitus explicitly depicts them as chaste (*Germania*, 18–19). Here we probably see the motif of the Golden Age at work.

Change and Constancy under the Late Empire

By the time of the fourth century CE, the former theme of Gallic threat seems to be only rarely resorted to, although some authors mention the historical wars between the Romans and Gauls. The true and entirely too real threat was, however, the ‘Germanic’ tribes whose admission to the structure of the empire was constantly being negotiated.¹⁰³ Nevertheless, at times the northern barbarians could still be described through all the traditional topoi formulated much earlier; Procopius, for one, uses them of a wide variety of barbarians in justifying Justinian’s wars of conquest. Not only are Goths, Vandals, and Gepids lumped together under the traditional ethnographic name of Sauromatae, but they are also expressly stated not to differ from each other in any way (*De bello Vandalico*, 3. 2. 3–5). Even more symptomatically, during the later empire the early history of Roman contact with

behind descriptions of peoples living by its shore, whose way of life seems exaggeratedly primitive: Plinius Maior, *Naturalis historia*, 16. 2 on the *Chauci*; Tacitus, *Annales*, 4. 72 on the *Frisii*.

¹⁰¹ In *Germania*, one of the groups that fill the need for *thaumasia* often accompanying ancient ethnographies is the *Aestii*; Hirstein, *Tacitus’ ‘Germania’*, p. 260. Cf. also O’Gorman, ‘No Place Like Rome’, p. 151. It could even be argued that the groups following the *Suiones* (*Germania*, 45) are largely in the tradition of wonder-writing. The mythologizing, boundary-breaking, and disconcerting properties of the Ocean in geographical narratives all through antiquity is a recurring theme in Romm, *The Edges of the Earth*, cf. pp. 22–23, 123–49, 156–71, 187–96, all with plentiful references to ancient authors.

¹⁰² Aristoteles, *Ethica Nicomachea*, 1336 a, and *Politica*, 1269 b; Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 5. 32. 7; Strabo, *Geographica*, 4. 4. 6; Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae*, 13. 79. 603 a; Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 30. 9.

¹⁰³ William R. Jones, ‘The Image of the Barbarian in Medieval Europe’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 13 (1971), 376–407 (p. 381).

the barbarian peoples of the north seems to have become somewhat assimilated, at least if Agathias's passage is indicative of a shared mentality: he seems to regard both Marius and Camillus as Romans who have fought against Germans.¹⁰⁴ In a way, the Cimbri and Teutones, who at first had occupied some shadowy middle-ground between the Celts and the Germans, had actually become so decidedly Germanic that even the earlier Celtic wars were now portrayed as having been fought against an enemy of the same ethnicity.¹⁰⁵ The other explanation, of course, would be that some Greek writers (and their sources) still had not developed any particular motivation to make sharp distinctions between northern barbarian groups.

The military qualities of the barbarians certainly remained a double-edged sword for the Romans even during the later empire. On the other hand it seems quite attractive to explain Ammianus's positive remarks on the warlike character of the Gauls (in themselves mostly derived from earlier sources, such as Timagenes, possibly through intermediaries) by the need of the empire for strong defenders. This is further emphasized by Ammianus's articulation of a 'lasting alliance' between the Roman and Gallic peoples that Caesar had forged¹⁰⁶ — a theme

¹⁰⁴ Agathias, *Historiae*, 1. 5. 5; cf. a corresponding confusion in Eutropius, *Breviarium*, 5. 1. Themistius, on the other hand, seems to confuse the 'Celts' and Germans of his own time: *Oratio*, 4. 57 b on Constantius's campaign against 'Celts'; and *Oratio*, 9. 125 c concerning Gratian; cf. John Vanderspoel, 'Constantius and the Celts', *Hermes*, 121 (1993), 504–07 (p. 506). In addition to the obvious classicizing tendency, a partial explanation for the faulty attributions must be the noted disinterest of late imperial authors towards the early imperial period when choosing their *exempla*: Ramsay MacMullen, *Roman Government's Response to Crisis A.D. 235–337* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), pp. 24–25; cf. Charles E. V. Nixon, 'The Use of the Past by the Gallic Panegyrists', in *Reading the Past in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Graeme Clarke and others (Rushcutters Bay: Australian National University Press, 1990), pp. 1–36 (p. 6) noting the dominant use of late republican figures by the Gallic panegyrists.

¹⁰⁵ Here appears, in effect, a similar dynamic as in the classical Athenian creation of the Persian 'other' followed by the 'barbarization' of foreigners in the distant past and mythology; cf. Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian*, pp. 101–59; Kim, *Ethnicity and Foreigners*, pp. 45–46.

¹⁰⁶ On the eternal bond, see Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 15. 12. 6: 'Nam omnes Gallias [...] post decennalis belli mutuas clades subegit Caesar dictator, societatique nostrae foederibus iunxit aeternis' (For Caesar the dictator subjugated the whole of Gaul after the mutual bloodshed of a ten-year war, and with eternal bonds joined them to us in an alliance). This view is already expressed in Claudius's speech to the Senate (Tacitus, *Annales*, 11. 24; *ILS*, 212), but it was certainly reinforced by the importance of late imperial Gaul in struggles with the Transrhene barbarians. It may also be that the later emphasis was partly generated by movements such as the Bacaudae 'abandoning the Roman alliance' (Zosimus, *Historia nova*, 6. 5). The need to stress the value of the Gallic provinces for Rome may also find its expression in Ammianus's choice of

already encountered in the promotional oration of Emperor Claudius on behalf of the Comatan Gauls. Neither does Sidonius Apollinaris shy from praising the military capabilities of a Roman by likening him to a barbarian.¹⁰⁷

In the field of mental and social characteristics, the Romans and barbarians could increasingly find some common ground if they chose to: not only were the barbarians socially incorporated into the empire through employment and settlement, but a steady trend of conversion to Christianity was in progress as well. It has been noted, perhaps quite rightly, that Christian cosmopolitanism never became the official policy of the Roman state after the conversion of Constantine,¹⁰⁸ though certain writers do seem to betray strong universalist tendencies.¹⁰⁹ Generally the barbarians, though newly Christian, remained un(der)civilized and threatening. Hence the adoption and transfer of barbarian imagery from antiquity to the Middle Ages (and beyond) had probably much more to do with the general nature of literary tradition in the West than with any Christian universal tendencies hypothetically reconciling all manner of oppositions. On a more fundamental level the development — or lack thereof, actually — should perhaps be ascribed in equal measure to the universal need for defining cultural self in relation to the uncivilized other. However that may be, the policies of the empire were probably only seldom shaped by Christian idealism in any decisive fashion.¹¹⁰ On the other

Hellenistic aetiologies for the Gauls: *Res gestae*, 15. 9. 2–7, among which perhaps the most telling is 15. 9. 5, which would effectively deprive Gaul of any autochthonous inhabitants and derive its civilization from the Trojan forefathers of the Romans.

¹⁰⁷ Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carmina*, 5. 238–54, 5. 518–32, 7. 235–40.

¹⁰⁸ Jones, 'The Image of the Barbarian', pp. 380–81.

¹⁰⁹ Augustine is one prominent example: *De civitate Dei*, 16. 8, 18. 32, 18. 47–49, 20. 11, and *Epistula*, 93. 31. Irenaeus takes pleasure in the barbarian conversion (*Adversus haereses*, 3. 4. 2), though he is admittedly an early author in this context. Eusebius seems to have confidence in the potential of the barbarians to emerge from their savagery, just as the early, nomadic humans already possessed reason with which to emerge from their impiety: *Historia ecclesiastica*, 1. 2. 19; *Praeparatio evangelica*, 2. 5. 3–5. On the other hand, Eusebius's casting of the Christian Emperor as a saviour-figure almost necessitated the parallel between demons and barbarians: *In laudem Constantini*, 6. 21, 7. 12. This was fundamental for the development of the Eastern Empire's victory ideology: *ibid.*, 7. 13.

¹¹⁰ This is not to deny the strong appeal that the 'Ambrosian-Eusebian imperial theology' (Wolfram, *The Roman Empire*, pp. 204–05) must have held for the circle around the emperor, but in the West, at any rate, it soon became unsustainable. The East is quite another matter entirely, and the 'Ideology of Eternal Victory' has been well documented there; Michael Maas, *John Lydus and the Roman Past: Antiquarianism and Politics in the Age of Justinian* (London: Routledge, 1992),

hand, there has sometimes been a rather strong — perhaps too strong — emphasis on the defining role of the state in the formation of identities, such as in Patrick Amory's meticulous treatise on people and identity in Ostrogothic Italy.¹¹¹ Certainly, we are dealing here as elsewhere with the world view of the elite, but even so a possibility of discrepancies should be recognized between the supposed state propaganda (often so insufficiently demonstrable) and the writers of the literary elite — all the more when these writers belong to the ecclesiastical elite, whose motives may sometimes be rather more otherworldly than those of the state.¹¹²

The transmission of ethnographic and other *topoi* from classical authors firstly to classicizing and further to medieval ones has received some highly qualified scholarship in the recent past, especially in regard to Byzantium.¹¹³ Crucial to any search for a new dynamic of characterizing northern barbarians in a Christian empire is to take into account at least two broad developments, instead of simplifying the overall dynamic by concentrating on the sheer transmission of images and narrative devices in the literary tradition.

Firstly, and with wide-ranging implications, the whole Mediterranean world—*externae gentes* / civilized—barbarian dichotomy had lost some of its internal cohesion with the barbarian groups being admitted and partly assimilated into the structure of the empire.¹¹⁴ And just as the barbarians were no longer simply those outside the

pp. 83–96; cf. Lellia Cracco Ruggini, 'Intolerance: Equal and Less Equal in the Roman World', *CPh*, 82 (1987), 187–205 (p. 197); Amory, *People and Identity*, pp. 23 n. 38, 135–36.

¹¹¹ Amory, *People and Identity*, e.g. pp. 43, 46, 54, though in many instances (e.g. pp. 34–35) mainly summarizing theories of the 'ethnogenesis school' of Reinhard Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung: das Werden der frühmittelalterlichen Gentes* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1961) and Herwig Wolfram, *Geschichte der Goten: von den Anfängen bis zur Mitte des sechsten Jahrhunderts* (Munich: Beck, 1983), which are not unreservedly subscribed to (p. 292).

¹¹² Cf. Edward A. Thompson, *Romans and Barbarians: The Decline of the Western Empire* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982), p. 248.

¹¹³ Cf. note 1 above.

¹¹⁴ The subject has seen extensive scholarship recently; cf. e.g. Sven Rugullis, *Die Barbaren in den spätromischen Gesetzen: Eine Untersuchung des Terminus 'barbarus'* (Frankfurt: Lang, 1992), *passim*; Amory, *People and Identity*, pp. 22–23 (*contra* Herwig Wolfram, 'The Shaping of the Early Medieval Kingdoms', *Viator*, 1 (1970), 11–20 (p. 2 n. 6), citing as an example of the new 'tribal' sense of the word *Romanus* in the anonymous *Origo gentis Romanae*); Jones, 'The Image of the Barbarian', p. 386. Indicative of the need to seek a new common indicator for the 'genuine' inhabitants of the empire is the coining of the term *Romania* to denote the empire: François Paschoud, *Roma Aeterna: études sur la patriotisme romain dans l'Occident latin à l'époque des grandes invasions* (Rome: Institut suisse, 1967), p. 18. Another telling new coinage is the *Spanoguasconia* of the *Ravenna*

empire, we can read Themistius exclaiming how each of us has a barbarian tribe within oneself, stubborn and disobedient — namely the primal emotions and passions (*Oratio*, 10. 131 b–c) — whose opposition to reason is moreover likened to that of the Scythians and Germans to the Romans. A fine piece of rhetoric, but one that uses the names of barbarian *phyla* simply as ad hoc embellishments of argumentation. If foreignness in classical antiquity had been predominantly cultural in nature instead of ethnic, the ethnographic labels of Late Antiquity certainly did not clarify the situation; whether about ‘Greeks’ or ‘barbarians’, the dynamic of cultural foreignness had clearly fragmented into a complex interplay of identities, among which religious and occupational themes played just as important a role as cultural or ethnic.¹¹⁵ Indeed, it could even be claimed that by the fifth century the old, continuously renewing mental pairing of centre and periphery had been thrown into confusion.¹¹⁶ But, as always, we must also take into account that

Cosmography (4. 41), combining a Roman province with a group of ‘internal barbarians’, the *Vascones*; cf. Franz Staab, ‘Ostrogothic Geographers at the Court of Theodoric the Great: A Study of Some Sources of the Anonymous Cosmographer of Ravenna’, *Viator*, 7 (1976), 27–64 (p. 45) on Anonymus Ravennas using a third-century source, possibly Castorius, in describing Spain.

¹¹⁵ Of ‘Greeks’, see e.g. Gillian Clark, ‘Translate into Greek: Porphyry of Tyre on the New Barbarians’, in *Constructing Identities in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Richard Miles (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 112–32 (p. 122); of ‘barbarians’, see e.g. Rugullis, *Die Barbaren*, pp. 39–41 (*barbari* acquiring the meanings of *hostes* and *adversarii*); cf. the case of the ‘heretical’ *circumcelliones* of North Africa with their partial origin as an *ordo* of seasonal labourers: MacMullen, *Enemies of the Roman Order*, pp. 200–02. On the other hand we see old regional and linguistic definitions resurgent among Italo-centric writers: Amory, *People and Identity*, p. 120.

¹¹⁶ Thus the traditional notion of *barbari* living in *barbaricum* (e.g. Rugullis, *Die Barbaren*, p. 130; O’Gorman, ‘No Place Like Rome’, p. 139) faced strong real-life evidence to the contrary; cf. Amory, *People and Identity*, p. 307. In such a situation describing an internal enemy as ‘barbarian’ would have lost something of its alarm (contrary to the earlier Bacaudic disturbance): indeed, many rebellious or usurping armies and individuals are described as ‘barbarian’ almost as a matter of course — partly due to their opposition to the (more or less) established authority, but more importantly to the sheer structure of the army; if not genuine barbarians, the soldiers had become associated with them through their occupation. Examples include Emperor Julian calling the barbarians in Magnentius’s army ‘Celts and Galatians’ (*Oratio*, 1. 43 c) and ‘Celts, Iberians, and Germans’ (*Oratio*, 2. 56 b); Ambrose (*Epistula ad Valentinianum II Imperatorem*, 29. 889) concerning Magnus Maximus’s boast of his barbarian troops; cf. Pan. Lat., viii(v). 16. 4, using *imitatio barbariae* of Carausius’s dead non-barbarian soldiers; Sozomenus, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 7. 13; Zacharias, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 8. 2 (on Vitalianus of Thrace); Victor Tunnunensis, *Chronicon*, s.a. 514. Even ‘legitimate’ (persecuting) emperors could be attacked for their semi-barbarian roots by their antagonists: Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum*, 9. 2 (Galerius), 38. 3 (Maximinus Daia).

sometimes the ‘ethnic labels’ are simply old names inherited from the earlier tradition and used for their exotic or pleasantly Atticizing flavour.

Secondly, the diversification of the dynamic in barbarian depictions was also to a large extent consequent on the conversion of the barbarian *gentes* to Christianity. A much more uncertain point in this context is whether the well-documented religious inadequacy of classical and early imperial barbarian depictions can be suggested as continuing noticeably after the adoption of Christian denominations as the paradigm of religious difference.¹¹⁷ In other words the problem boils down to whether the religious deficiency of Arian barbarians was still seen as somehow depending on their cultural affiliation.

A case worth mentioning is Augustine’s note at the beginning of *De civitate Dei* on the Visigoths sparing the Christian shrines from their spoliation (1. 1). Apparently such mercy is unexpected when coming from barbarians and can only be explained by divine providence. Was the surprise partly generated by the Gothic Arianism, or was this kind of behaviour only to be expected in a war waged by Christian against Christians — regardless of whether the belligerents were barbarians or Romans? It is quite possible that we simply have here a relatively unbiased narrative of Gothic spoliation; at any rate, it has been suggested that the very nature of most of our texts gives an exaggerated picture of the persecution of the Catholics by the Arians.¹¹⁸

Notwithstanding how the Vandals and Goths themselves perceived their own Arianism and its power to distinguish them from the Catholics,¹¹⁹ it may be that the Catholic observers did, indeed, count the heretical beliefs as being elemental to their character. Ennodius, for instance, seems to contrast *catholicus et Romanus* as a description of position superior both to the Eastern emperor and the Rugian barbarians,¹²⁰ and similarly we have seen Procopius (though largely writing in the political register influenced by Justinianic propaganda) associate Arianism with groups stemming from a single barbarian stock (*De bello Vandalico*, 3. 2. 2). This single-origin model is reflected, as well, in Jordanes’s derivation of the Gothic stock from the island of Scandza, making them entirely foreign invaders in the

¹¹⁷ Naturally, many passages illustrate the inadequacy of heathen barbarian religion in comparison with the Catholic one, such as Agathias, *Historiae*, 1. 7 on the Alamanni. The Arian barbarians’ opposition to Catholic barbarians is a much more nuanced question.

¹¹⁸ Liebeschuetz, ‘*Gens into regnum*’, p. 81.

¹¹⁹ The Vandals do not seem to have thought of their Arianism as restricted to the Vandal *gens*: Liebeschuetz, ‘*Gens into regnum*’, pp. 77–78.

¹²⁰ Ennodius, *Vita Epiphani*, 122 (Emperor Anthemius), 117–18 (the Rugi).

Mediterranean.¹²¹ After Procopius — and without doubt influenced by him — Agathias strongly favours the Franks over the Goths on account of their Catholic faith,¹²² though he generally is dismissive of the barbarians. So it seems that there is some evidence to suggest that barbarians were still regarded as susceptible to lapses in matters of religion — not a much differing sentiment from that abused by Cicero in his *Pro Fonteio*. It should be noted, however, that substandard religious practices are among the more universal characteristics of the cultural ‘other’.¹²³

Whatever were the pedigrees — or lack thereof — that the barbarian tribes could present to the Romans, the writers in their classicizing mode would usually venture only as far as their classical exemplars were wont to go.¹²⁴ As the presence of the barbarians within and beside the Roman society became impossible to shrug off, techniques of accommodation would have to be adopted. Mentally this often took the form of trying to find some classically acceptable parallel or justification for the barbarian mores. These aetiologies were then adopted by the barbarians with variable enthusiasm — just as had been done among the Gallic tribes of the later republic and early empire. Another technique would have been to explain the unknown barbaric by the known exotic, as in the case of Burgundian kingship — in which the ruler’s continuing tenure depended on success both in war and harvest — being compared to the pharaonic customs of Egypt.¹²⁵

¹²¹ Amory, *People and Identity*, p. 300.

¹²² Cameron, ‘Agathias on the Early Merovingians’, p. 114.

¹²³ Jonathan Z. Smith, ‘Adde Parvum Parvo Magnus Acervus Erit’, *History of Religions*, 11 (1971), 67–90 (pp. 69–71); Cracco Ruggini, ‘Intolerance’, p. 190.

¹²⁴ As well as the biblical models among Christian authors: Wolfram, *The Roman Empire*, p. 205. One of the earlier instances in the context of western barbarians would have been Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, 1. 6. 1 (123–28). Eugippius combines both the classical mentality and the Christian reading; for him the end of Rome is the end of the Mediterranean-style urban way of life (*Vita Severini*, 1. 4, 31. 6) with biblical parallels (*ibid.*, 4. 3, 40. 5, 43. 1–2, 44. 5). Cf. John H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, ‘Citizen Status and Law in the Roman Empire and the Visigothic Kingdom’, in *Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800*, ed. by Walter Pohl and Helmut Reimitz (Leiden: Brill, 1998), pp. 131–52 (p. 152) on the Romano-Gothic relations being advanced through the Christianization of the literature in a way secular literary tradition could not.

¹²⁵ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 28. 5. 14; Isidorus, *Etymologiae*, 9. 2. 99, 9. 4. 28. Cf. Wolfram, *The Roman Empire*, p. 43.

Concluding Remarks

The dynamic between the depictions of Gauls and Germans in the imperial period is just as much about broadening of categories as the transfer of motifs — paradoxically, since the category of ‘northern barbarians’ certainly was not very narrow to begin with. Partly such perceived broadening may stem from the very nature of literary tradition, apt to be appropriated and realigned as situation demanded and the widened mental geography of the imperial mind allowed. Whereas until the late republic the Celts/Gauls were the prominent and most menacing northern group of barbarians, against whom the Romans went to war with considerable regularity, the conquest of the Gallic provinces increased the Mediterranean civilization’s knowledge of the northern peoples to such an extent that the Gauls could no longer be regarded as the primary specimens of the group. Indeed, what to Greek observers had appeared as an unfathomable wilderness of western wasteland, filled with variously named but essentially similar barbarians that could for simplicity be all labelled as *Galatai*, was through the Roman conquest shaped into a geographically described whole, while the indistinct and disconcertingly endless wilderness was restructured as beginning from the Rhine and running all the way until the edges of the earth much along the lines of Caesar’s Hercynian forest. The Ocean, even more menacingly infinite, defined the British Isles, imparting to them the same mythical, boundless quality that formerly had characterized the whole Western quarter of the world. Both in Germany and in Britain, this sense of infiniteness was enhanced by the fact of incomplete subjugation — a more complete form of which had largely stripped the Gauls of their former fame of matchless ferocity. Something of the past danger seemed, however, to linger in the Roman mind with regard to the position and disposition of the Gauls, and these sentiments certainly did resurface in times of turmoil — as may even be the case with the Bagaudic disturbances.

While the primary northern barbarians would always be those outside the borders of the empire, it would appear quite clearly that most of the traits attributed to the Germans actually derived from the earlier images largely formulated through Greek and Roman contact with the Gauls. Moreover, some elements should be seen as even more general in nature, constituting genuine *Wandermotive* that could be bent to fit any foreign group. Thus, the mental representations of Gauls and Germans, respectively, cannot be said to properly form distinct and ethnically articulated wholes, instead having many themes in common and, indeed, hardly existing independently of each other within a wider, hazily recognized general iconosphere of the northern/western barbarian. Above, some relatively distinct

developments have been suggested, mainly consisting of elements that unexpectedly fail to be transferred in our surviving sources, and others that seem to obtain differing emphasis, such as the idealizing/moralizing tendency found in Tacitus, Seneca, and others. Much more conspicuous, however, are the continuous topical articulations of barbarian inadequacy, exploiting elements that, taken together, seem to constitute a long-living iconosphere concerning the character of northern barbarians. The Christianization of the empire and the integration of barbarians into its structure brought some themes of barbarian characterization to the fore, but even these developments were continuously articulated through conventional narrative devices, the form and content of which was crucially limited by the literary tradition.

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AMMIANUS ON FOREIGNERS

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The fourth-century Latin, non-Christian literature contains numerous value judgements regarding foreigners and provincials. A great variety of negative descriptions, many of them recurring stereotypes, is found there. That much is obvious to everybody who reads the texts. Clear also is that this reflects the increased intensity of warfare with foreign peoples as compared with previous centuries. There may be less agreement on the background of — and overall attitude reflected by — those views. The argument of the present paper is that the various forms of stereotypes and patterns of prejudice which can be found in the Greek and Roman literature of this period form a coherent ideology, dividing groups of people in fixed categories of superior and inferior levels. I shall argue that we can detect here a systematic approach that is best described as an early form of racism.¹ The following topics will be discussed:

1. Attitudes towards provincials. These are to be divided into (a) urbanized and settled peoples, and (b) nomads.
2. Attitudes towards foreigners living outside the Roman Empire, again including settled peoples and nomads.

The focus here will be on the non-urbanized provincials and on outsiders, notably nomads. To be considered in particular are the common stereotypes encountered towards all these peoples while an attempt is made to determine whether these should be regarded as simple ethnic stereotypes, as a set of vague forms of prejudice,

¹ This is a continuation of the discussion in Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004) where the fourth century is not taken into account in any systematic manner.

or rather as part of an ideology, that is, as expressions of early, premodern racist attitudes.²

The author supplying most of our evidence is Ammianus Marcellinus.³ Other contemporary works such as the *Expositio totius mundi* will be occasionally mentioned.⁴ It must be emphasized that the collection of sources discussed here is by no means complete. I have selected passages that I considered relevant and make no claim to have done more than that.

The Roman Empire

We may begin with some thoughts of Ammianus (*Res gestae*, 14. 6. 3) comparing the stages of the existence of Rome with those of an individual. From the cradle to the end of childhood are Rome's first three hundred years; wars were fought in the vicinity of the city. During the second stage, youth and manhood, triumphs were celebrated all over the world. The third stage is adult life; during the late republic Rome crossed the Alps and the sea. The fourth stage, in which Ammianus himself lived is old age; victories were celebrated in name alone; Rome enjoyed a quiet existence. The equation of a state with an individual is a common pattern of thought, as is the opposite: the assumption that an individual necessarily has all the collective characteristics of the group to which he belongs. Both ideas confuse the individual and the group, denying the individual his individuality and the group its diversity. There is a second aspect to Ammianus's approach worth observing here, namely the certainty that the progress of time can only bring deterioration, not improvement. Thus he cites Cato the Censor as a model of virtue (14. 6. 8) and idealizes the republic with its simple soldiers as opposed to the decadent present. These are common patterns of thought in antiquity and part of a complex of ideas which must be kept in mind if we want to understand ancient attitudes towards other peoples and foreigners.

² Note the broad view, from a different perspective, published by Peter Heather, 'The Barbarian in Late Antiquity: Image, Reality and Transformation', in *Constructing Identities in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Richard Miles (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 235–58. Heather here shows the importance of texts in the development of a dominant ideology concerning *Romanitas* and foreigners in the fourth and fifth centuries.

³ See John Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus* (London: Duckworth, 1989), chap. 14, 'Barbarians and Bandits'.

⁴ The *Historia Augusta* is discussed rather extensively in the work cited in note 1, and it would be repetitive to return to this text here.

Romans and Greeks

Next we shall do well to see how, in the fourth century, one of the old and complex issues of relationships within the empire is expressed, namely the status of Greeks among the Latin-speaking Romans.⁵ From the second century BCE onwards these were ambivalent or negative, even if there was admiration for the Greeks in their classical period. Ammianus gives us a glimpse of the sort of friction that existed in the fourth century. Emperor Julian emphatically saw himself as Greek, or rather as Thracian by origin and Greek by culture.⁶ When, as Caesar, he was campaigning in Gaul, generally with success, there came a point where his soldiers went hungry. The mutinous troops then called him 'an Asiatic, a Greekling, a deceiver, and a fool with a show of wisdom'.⁷ The level of Julian's Gallic soldiers is depicted as remarkably low. At one point they are described as 'wild animals in caves'.⁸ However, Julian was disparaged in similar terms not only at that level. At court he was called 'a nanny-goat and no man, insufferable with his victories, hairy, a chattering mole and an ape in purple, and a Greekish pedant'.⁹ Clearly, then, a Greek-speaking emperor, even one whose Latin was good,¹⁰ but one who identified with Greek culture and society, could evoke a traditional mixture of negative associations: dishonesty, intellectual pretense, pedantry, and lack of masculinity.¹¹

Ammianus himself had a positive attitude towards Greek language and culture; for instance, speaking of the historian Timagenes, he calls him 'a true Greek in

⁵ See Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, chap. 9 for the attitudes from the second century BCE onwards.

⁶ Julianus, *Misopogon*, 40. Cf. Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, p. 402.

⁷ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 17. 9. 3: 'Iulianum, Asianum, Graeculum, fallacem specie sapientiae, stolidam.' Cf. P. de Jonge, *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus 17* (Groningen: Bouma's Boekhuis, 1977), p. 237. The expression 'Asianus' usually refers to a style of rhetoric, but here clearly is meant to describe Julian's entire personality and style.

⁸ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 19. 6. 3–4: 'utque dentatae in caveis bestiae'.

⁹ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 17. 11. 1: 'In odium venit cum victoriis suis capella, non homo, ut hirsutum Iulianum carpentes, appellantesque "loquacem talpam" et "purpuratam simiam" et "litterionem Graecum" et his congruentia plurima.' Cf. de Jonge, *Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus 17*, pp. 266–67. *Capella*, a kid or young goat, and *hirsutus* refer to Julian's philosopher's beard.

¹⁰ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 16. 5. 8: 'Super his aderat Latine quoque disserendi sufficiens sermo'; Libanius, *Oratio*, 12. 92. Cf. P. de Jonge, *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus 16* (Groningen: Bouma's Boekhuis, 1972), pp. 34–35.

¹¹ In the sixth century Justinian's soldiers are accused of being 'Greeks' to the dissatisfaction of Procopius, *Anecdota*, 24. 7.

accuracy as well as language'.¹² He also greatly admired Julian and, even if he saw him as Greek in culture, he, paradoxically, regarded him also as a model of the traditional, old-fashioned Roman virtue, which Ammianus cherished. Thus, in 16. 1, he compares him with the best emperors: Titus, Trajan, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius. He explains in a lengthy eulogy (16. 5) that Julian practised the old republican virtues of frugality and sobriety. He was a philosopher and intellectual, passed his days in brilliant and witty conversation, had mastered rhetoric, knew Latin well enough, thoroughly prepared for battle, and instituted reforms in civil administration. The implication of all this is that in Ammianus's eyes Julian combined the best qualities of both the ancient Romans and the Greeks. This is not an ideal encountered in earlier centuries, but quite understandable if we find it in the works of a Latin-writing historian from the eastern part of the empire. One of the few characters who forms the subject of even more paradoxical praise is Eutherius, the chief chamberlain, a eunuch, but — here is the paradox — a model of loyalty and virtue, who criticized even Julian as 'having been raised in the manners of Asia',¹³ embodying a quite negative complex of characteristics which is in general regarded as typical precisely of eunuchs.

The examples of attitudes towards various groups of provincials and foreigners found in Ammianus and other contemporary Latin authors are consistent. There is tension between east and west, Greek and Latin, expressed sometimes in very strong language, but this is cultural and social hostility, significant but not racist.

The Provinces: Gauls

Ammianus describes a number of provincial peoples in anachronistic terms, as if there had been no change at all from the moment of their final absorption into the empire. There is no obvious explanation for this, except to say that those peoples were seen as having lost their identity and place in history once they became Roman provincials.

The first to be mentioned here are the Gauls as described in an excursus (15. 9. 1–8, 12). It opens with a reference to his sources, Timagenes being the most

¹² Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 15. 9. 1: 'et diligentia Graecus et lingua'. Cf. P. de Jonge, *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus 15.6–13* (Groningen: Wolters, 1953), p. 49.

¹³ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 16. 6: 'Asiaticis coalitum moribus'. Cf. de Jonge, *Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus 16*, p. 67.

recent, a Greek author of the first century BCE. The entire treatment has been made to look as if it was written about the time of Caesar's conquest and annexation of Transalpine Gaul. The social reality is depicted in terms of the stereotypes of that period: thus the Belgae had the reputation of being the most valiant, because they were far removed from civilized life and not been made effeminate by imported luxuries, an observation obviously copied from Caesar himself.¹⁴ The Aquitanians in the South, on the contrary, had their characters weakened to effeminacy because of their proximity to Rome, the deteriorating effect of which was also asserted by Caesar himself. Thus they easily came under the sway of Rome (15. 11. 4–5).

Then there is the next chapter, 15. 12, on the manners and customs of the Gauls which is difficult to see as anything other than satire

Almost all the Gauls are of tall stature, fair and ruddy, terrible for the fierceness of their eyes, fond of quarrelling, and of overbearing insolence. In fact, a whole band of foreigners will be unable to cope with one of them in a fight, if he call in his wife, stronger than he by far and with flashing eyes; least of all when she swells her neck and gnashes her teeth, and posing her huge white arms, proceeds to rain punches mingled with kicks, like shots, discharged by the twisted cords of a catapult.¹⁵

This might have come straight from an Asterix album. It is, in fact, an embellishment of a similar statement in an earlier text, predating Caesar's conquest: 'The women of the Gauls are not only like the men in their great stature, but they are a match for them in courage as well.'¹⁶ This reflects common attitudes towards what the Romans called barbarians: as so often in Greek and Latin literature, the male and female roles are reversed, such as in Egypt, which is characteristic of their perversity.

¹⁴ For my views on Caesar's opinions expressed in *Bellum Gallicum*, 1. 1, 2. 4, 2. 15. 4, see Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, p. 415.

¹⁵ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 15. 12. 1: 'Celsioris staturae et candidi paene Galli sunt omnes et rutili luminum que toruitate terribiles, auidi iurgiorum et sublatius insolentes. | nec enim eorum quemquam adhibita uxore rixantem multo se fortiore et glauca peregrinorum ferre poterit globus tum maxime, cum illa inflata ceruice suffrendens ponderans que niueas ulnas et uastas | admixtis calcibus emittere coeperit pugnos ut catapultas tortilibus neruis excussas.'

¹⁶ Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, 5. 32. 2: 'αἱ δὲ γυναῖκες τῶν Γαλατῶν οὐ μόνον τοῖς μεγέθεσι παραπλήσιοι τοῖς ἀνδράσιν εἰσὶν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ταῖς ἀλκαῖς ἐνάμιλλοι.'

There is no objective reason for such anachronisms.¹⁷ The *Expositio totius mundi*, written in what was roughly Ammianus's age, gives a brief but fully up-to-date description of Gaul.¹⁸

Arabia

The treatment of the Eastern Provinces of the empire (14. 8) again does not refer to anything that happened after the end of the first century AD, except the section about Arabia which mentions the annexation by Trajan (14. 8. 3). On the whole, one gets the impression that Ammianus places himself normally at the time of the annexation in such excurses, as if development and history stop at that point. A people loses its independent history once it is part of the empire. All of the subsequent developments, which we call Romanization, acculturation, urbanization, and so on, and which we regard as serious topics for investigation, are in fact ignored. In other words, whatever happened to the Gauls and some of the peoples of the Near East between the mid-first century BCE and the mid-fourth century CE has not affected the stereotypes attached to them. These seem to be frozen at the moment of incorporation into the empire.

Persians

Turning now to Rome's neighbours, the first to be mentioned here are the Persians, the only major empire neighbouring Rome. During the early empire the Parthians appear in the sources as redoubtable but distant enemies. We encounter stereotypes, but not those typically attached to other eastern peoples. There is no obvious pattern of ethnic prejudice, let alone racism.¹⁹ This changed drastically over the centuries. In the literature of the Byzantine period we encounter attitudes

¹⁷ Theodor Mommsen, 'Ammians Geographica', *Hermes*, 16 (1881), 602–36, repr. as a chapter in Theodor Mommsen, *Gesammelte Schriften*, VII (Berlin: Weidmann, 1909), pp. 393–425 (pp. 395–97), already notes the schematic character of Ammianus's provincial excurses.

¹⁸ *Expositio totius mundi et gentium*, 58 (ed. by Jean Rougé (Paris: Cerf, 1966)). It mentions the imperial residence at Trier, a large city, and Arles. 'The entire region has valiant and noble men, which is why they say that the army of the Gauls is in time of war very numerous and brave. It is in every respect an admirable province.'

¹⁹ For the Persians in Greek and Roman sources, see Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, chap. 8. Ammianus has an extensive description of the Persian kingdom: 23. 6.

of far greater hostility towards Persia than was apparent in earlier centuries.²⁰ This is true especially for sixth-century authors such as Agathias in his excursus on Persian religion and Procopius: the Persians were considered perverted. They did not bury their dead properly; they exposed the sick instead of allowing them to recover. They practised consanguineous marriage and incest. They were incapable of understanding or producing genuine philosophy.²¹ From the fourth century we have at least one text worth mentioning here, because it might indicate a transition from the earlier to the later attitudes. This is the *Expositio totius mundi*, which describes the Persians briefly, combining stereotypes in a manner somewhat unusual as compared with earlier sources. The text asserts that they are remarkable in everything that is bad, but courageous in war. Then they say that the Persians commit great impieties: they ignore the dignity of nature and, like dumb animals, sleep with their mothers and sisters. They act in a manner without piety towards the god who made them. On the other hand, it is said that they have everything in abundance since they allow commercial relations with the peoples who are their neighbours.²²

The text admits that the Persians are courageous in war and prosperous in peace because of sensible trade policies. There is no precedent for this in earlier texts concerning the Parthians. Thereafter, however, follows the common fare, which was missing in earlier sources on the Parthians but forms the staple of hostile prejudice against foreigners in general: the denial of regular morals, sexual and religious; like other foreigners they are like animals.

Nomads

First and for the record, there is a well-known fact to be noted. The Greeks and Romans thoroughly misunderstood the essence of pastoral nomadism. Pastoral

²⁰ See Benjamin Isaac, *The Near East under Roman Rule: Selected Papers* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), pp. 439–41; Alain Chauvot, *Opinions romaines face aux barbares au IV^e siècle ap. J.-C.* (Paris: De Boccard, 1998), pp. 32–34, 45, 109–10.

²¹ For Agathias, see Averil Cameron, 'Agathias on the Sassanians', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 23–24 (1969–70), 67–183 (pp. 78–80 with comments on pp. 90–91).

²² *Expositio totius mundi et gentium*, 19–20 (ed. by Rougé): 'Post hos sunt Persae, Romanis propinquantes, qui historiantur valde in malis omnibus [...] et <in> bellis esse fortes. Et impietates ab eis magnas agi dicunt: non cognoscentes naturae dignitatem, sicuti multa animalia, matribus et sororibus condormiunt. Et impie faciunt in illum qui fecit eos deum. Alias autem abundare dicuntur in omnibus; data enim <potestate negotii gentibus adpropinquantibus suae regionis, ad eos omnia> abundare videntur.'

nomads, who depend on domesticated livestock, migrate in an established territory to find pasturage for their animals. Most groups have fixed sites that they occupy for considerable periods of the year. Some pastoralists depend entirely on their herds; others also hunt or gather, practise some agriculture, or trade with agricultural peoples for grain and other goods. The Greek and Roman literature gives a different view of such societies. This is the next topic to be considered here.

The sense of timelessness encountered above is not found in the excursions on less settled peoples who were pastoral nomads in the past and still lived in this manner when Ammianus wrote. This is true for the Saracens (14. 4), 'whom we never found desirable either as friends or as enemies, ranging up and down the country, and who in a brief space of time laid waste whatever they could find, like rapacious kites which, whenever they have caught sight of any prey from on high, seize it with swift swoop, and directly they have seized it make off'.²³ They are nomads, that is, homeless wanderers. Note the animal comparison which we encountered also in the case of Julian's Gallic soldiers. Ammianus describes the Saracens as an egalitarian society of warriors, 'half-nude, clad in dyed cloaks as far as the loins'.²⁴ Nudity is a sign of inferior culture; half nudity represents an intermediate level. Nomadism means to Ammianus, as it does to other Roman authors, a life without agriculture or cultivation, people 'roving continually over wide and extensive tracts without a home, without fixed abodes or laws'.²⁵ Their marriages are a temporary, commercial transaction.²⁶ Theirs is the ultimate form of unstructured, unproductive, and immoral life, the opposite of polis and empire. Elsewhere Ammianus gives a remarkable example of the sort of image the Saracens had at the time. At the battle of Hadrianople (in 378) one of them, 'with long hair and naked except for a loin-cloth, uttering hoarse and dismal cries, with drawn dagger rushed into the

²³ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 14. 4. 1: 'Saraceni, tamen nec amici nobis umquam nec hostes optandi, ultro citroque discursantes, quicquid inveniri poterat momento temporis parvi pastabant, milvorum rapacium similes, qui si praedam dispexerint celsius, volatur rapiunt celeri, ac si impraverint, non immorantur'. Cf. Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus Marcellinus*, pp. 342–45.

²⁴ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 14. 4. 3: 'omnes pari sorte sunt bellatores, seminudi coloratis sagulis pube tenus amicti'.

²⁵ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 14. 4. 3: 'sed errant semper per spatia longe lateque distenta, sine lare sine sedibus fixis aut legibus'.

²⁶ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 14. 4. 4. Cf. Pomponius Mela, *De chorographia*, 2. 21, where it is reported that Thracians auction their daughters, giving them in marriage to the highest bidder.

thick of the Gothic army, and after killing a man applied his lips to his throat and sucked the blood that poured out'.²⁷ This thoroughly demoralized the Goths. It may not quite be cannibalism, but is somehow related. It is the sort of story, reminiscent of later vampire superstition, which will be told about a group indulging in unnatural behaviour and therefore regarded as less than human. The drinking of blood is a recurring theme.

Ammianus says nothing about the Saracen diet, but for this we may turn instead to Jerome, *Life of Malchus*, 4: 'half-raw meat and camel's milk'.²⁸ This may have been true or not, but in any case this fits the overall impression of Saracens as crude savages, living to some extent like animals. In general it is thought to be characteristic of nomads that they live off their herds, and on milk and cheese.²⁹ They do not produce, do not store food, and do not engage in trade.

Two of the characteristics attributed to the Saracens recur in the treatment of Thrace. 'A description of Thrace would be easy, if the pens of the earlier writers agreed; but since their obscurity and their differences lend no aid to a work whose aim is truth, it will suffice to set forth what I myself remember to have seen.'³⁰ Ammianus would have preferred to rely on Greek authors of the later republic or early empire as he did for Gaul. However, the sources are unreliable, he says, because they disagree among themselves. In other words: he would have sought the material to rely upon for a description of Thrace in the earlier authors, if they had not been contradictory among themselves.³¹ He then proceeds to say something

²⁷ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 31. 16. 6: 'nudus omnia praeter pubem, subraucum et lugubre strepens, educto pugione, agmini se medio Gothorum inseruit, et interfecti hostis iugulo labra admovit, effusumque cruorem exsuxit'.

²⁸ Cf. Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus Marcellinus*, pp. 337–38; Susan Weingarten, *The Saint's Saint: Hagiography and Geography in Jerome* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), pp. 180–81. Weingarten points out that there is a term in the Babylonian Talmud (b. Pesahim 41a) for half-raw, half-roasted meat, which, she argues, implies that this is a real, local food, not just a literary stereotype. The former, however, does not exclude the latter. For the ideologically significant connection between nomadism and diet in ancient texts, see B. D. Shaw, "'Eaters of flesh, drinkers of milk': The Ancient Mediterranean Ideology of the Pastoral Nomad", *Ancient Society*, 13–14 (1982–83), 3–52.

²⁹ For example, Strabo, *Geographica*, 7. 3. 7 (300) and in general Shaw's article cited in the previous note.

³⁰ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 27. 4. 2: 'Erat Thraciarum descriptio facilis, si veteres concinerent stili, quorum obscura varietas, quoniam opus veritatem professum non iuvat, sufficiet ea quae vidisse meminimus expedire.'

³¹ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 27. 4. 9–13 gives a condensed account of the Roman conquest of the region.

about the Scordisci, Celts who clashed regularly with Roman troops in the second and first centuries BCE, but who were fully subjected towards the end of the first century BCE and then resided in Pannonia Inferior, Moesia Superior, and Dalmatia.³² Ammianus, while observing that they no longer live in Thrace, says that they 'used to offer prisoners to Bellona and Mars and drink their blood out of human skulls'.³³ So, here we have a combination of two forms of ultimate barbarism: human sacrifice and drinking of human blood. It is a familiar combination, for Herodotus already reported of the Scythians that they sacrificed one out of every hundred of their captive enemies and drank their blood (each Scythian the blood of his first victim).³⁴ The use of the skulls of killed enemies is similarly attributed first by Herodotus to the Scythians.³⁵ Ammianus quite frequently echoes Herodotus, applying his extreme stories to any nomads, while Herodotus writes about the Scythians only — real people living far away, but who could also be seen in Athens in Herodotus's days. Ammianus transfers these stories to the nomads of his own days, some of them hardly known within the empire and whom most Romans had never met. In this connection it is undoubtedly significant that many authors of the fourth and fifth centuries designated the contemporary Goths as 'Scythians'. Remarkable in itself is not that Ammianus and others copy descriptions of foreign peoples from the distant past, but that it was also regarded as self-evident that those characterizations were applicable to other foreigners in the present. Thus the timelessness observed in the descriptions of Gauls and other provincials is present

³² Note also Florus, *Epitome*, 1. 39. 12: 'saevissimi omnium Thracum Scordisci fuere, sed calliditas quoque ad robur accesserat'. J. J. Wilkes, *Dalmatia* (London: Routledge, 1969), pp. 171–72; *Der Kleine Pauly: Lexikon der Antike*, ed. by Konrad Ziegler and others (Stuttgart: Druckenmüller, 1964–65), s.v. Scordisci (Burian) with references.

³³ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 27. 4. 4: 'hostiis captivorum Bellonae litantes et Marti, humanumque sanguinem in ossibus capitum cavis bibentes avidius'.

³⁴ Herodotus, *Historiae*, 4. 62, 4. 64. Strabo, *Geographica*, 7. 3. 7 (300) asserts that the Scythians practised human sacrifice and were cannibals, but also cites reports different in tone 7. 3. 8 (301) and 7. 3. 9 (302), citing Ephorus.

³⁵ Herodotus, *Historiae*, 4. 65; cf. *Erodoto, Le storie libro IV*, intro. and comm. by Aldo Corcella, ed. by Silvio M. Medaglia, and trans. by Augusto Frascchetti (Milan: Mondadori, 1993), p. 286. Subsequently: Plato, *Euthydemus*, 299e; Strabo, *Geographica*, 7. 3. 7 (300); Pomponius Mela, *De chorographia*, 2. 13 and cf. *Pomponius Mela, Chorographie*, ed., trans., and annotated by A. Silberman (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1988), pp. 171–72 n. 3. Note also the Essedonians who ate the corpses of their parents and then prepared their skulls to serve as drinking cups, according to Herodotus, *Historiae*, 4. 26, followed by Pomponius Mela, *De chorographia*, 2. 9. Herodotus attributes the latter custom also to the Scythians, as already noted.

in another manner in the treatment of foreigners regarded as barbarians. They never change, an assumption that is one of the essential ingredients of racism.

The Thracian Odrysae are singled out for their uniquely savage cruelty, but this is represented as belonging to the past.³⁶ We may note that the roughly contemporary *Expositio totius mundi* again has a brief and up-to-date paragraph on Thrace.³⁷ It is wealthy, has good fighters, and therefore supplies the Roman army frequently with troops. It has two splendid cities: Constantinople and Heraclea.

The Isaurians, mountain dwellers in southern Asia Minor, were known for their fairly frequent unruliness and attacks on the surrounding cities and countryside.³⁸ In connection with such events in 353–54 Ammianus cites Cicero, *Pro Cluentio*, 15. 67: “as even wild animals, when warned by hunger, generally return to the place where they were once fed”, so they all, swooping like a whirlwind down from their steep and rugged mountains, made for the districts near the sea’.³⁹

In his description of renewed rebellion in 359, Ammianus says that the Isaurians ‘gradually coming to life again just as snakes are wont to dart forth from their holes in the spring time, sallying forth from their rocky and inaccessible mountain fastnesses, and massed together in dense bands, were harrying their neighbours with thefts and brigandage, eluding the frontier-defences of our soldiers by their skill as mountaineers’.⁴⁰ It is not the aim of the present paper to analyse Ammianus’s narrative. Relevant here are the repeated animal comparisons which we found also in connection with Julian’s Gallic soldiers, with descriptions of the Saracens, and which will be encountered again in the case of the Huns and others, for

³⁶ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 27. 4. 9: ‘e quibus praeter alios ut immaniter efferati memorantur Odrysae’. I am not sure what source Ammianus could have had for this. In the classical Greek historians this is not a common view.

³⁷ *Expositio totius mundi et gentium*, 50 (ed. by Rougé): ‘Dives in fructibus et maximos habens viros et fortes in bello; propter quod et frequenter inde milites tolluntur. Habet autem civitates splendidas Constantinopolim et Heracleam.’ See also *Expositio totius mundi et gentium* on Gaul, above, p. 242.

³⁸ Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus Marcellinus*, pp. 355–67.

³⁹ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 14. 2. 2: ‘Atque, (ut Tullius ait) ut etiam bestiae fame monitae plerumque ad eum locum ubi aliquando pastae sunt revertuntur, ita omnes instar turbinis degressi montibus impeditis et arduis loca petere mari confinia.’

⁴⁰ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 19. 13. 1: ‘His temporibus Isauri diu quieti [...] paulatim reviviscentes, ut solent verno tempore foveis exsilire serpentes, saltibus degressi scrupulosis et inviis, confertique in cuneos densos per furta et latrocinia finitimos afflictabant’.

instance the Alemanni.⁴¹ As I have argued elsewhere, animal comparisons are a significant phenomenon in ancient literature.⁴² The implication is clear: in comparing barbarous peoples with animals it is implied that they, somehow, should be classified as not quite human, even if they are not actually animals, but do resemble them to some extent. Some remote foreigners indeed were thought to turn temporarily into animals as Herodotus first records in an early version of werewolf superstition.⁴³

An essential ingredient in the list of objections against these enemies is their manner of fighting. Instead of launching proper heavy infantry against superior Roman legions, they engage in guerilla tactics, raids, light-armed attacks, and the like, unlike gentlemen fighters. That is why the Saracens are like kites and the Isaurians like wild animals. The idea is expressed again in a speech of Constantius in 358, following a defeat of the Sarmatians.

Our enemies [...] were laying waste our farthest frontiers, crossing the rivers now in dug-out canoes and sometimes on foot; they did not trust to engagements nor to arms and strength, but, as is their custom, to lurking brigandage, with the craft and various methods of deceit dreaded also by our forefathers from our very first knowledge of this people.⁴⁴

The Emperor, of course, objected to the enemy's laying waste of the frontier regions, but that is not the essential point of this passage. Roman troops did the same thing to enemy frontier zones. This is what happened in war all around. The Emperor's moral indignation is inspired by the reliance on speed and surprise, rather than brute force — tactics seen as 'craft', 'brigandage', and 'deceit'. Zosimus, apparently following Eunapius, has a peculiar view of the reasons for these tactics: the Huns were incapable of fighting a regular infantry battle because they could not stand with their legs on the ground, being accustomed to spending all day on their

⁴¹ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 16. 6. 17: 'utque bestiae custodum neglegentia raptu vivere solitae [...] armenta vel greges incursant, ita etiam illi cunctis, quae diripuerunt, consumptis fame urgente agebant aliquotiens praedas'.

⁴² Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, pp. 194–207.

⁴³ The Neuri: Herodotus, *Historiae*, 4. 65 and 4. 105, followed by Pomponius Mela, *De chorographia*, 2. 14 with a somewhat different version. Pomponius Mela is echoed by Solinus, *De mirabilibus mundi*, 15. 2. See references in Corcella's commentary, *Erodoto*, pp. 316–17.

⁴⁴ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 17. 13. 27: 'Persultabat Illyricum furor hostilis [...] variisque discursibus vastabat extima limitum, nunc cavatis roboribus, aliquotiens peragrans pedibus flumina, non congressibus nec armis fretus aut viribus, sed latrociniis assuetus occultis, astu et ludificandi varietate, iam inde ab instuta gente nostris quoque maioribus formidatus.'

horses, even sleeping on them.⁴⁵ These are deeply felt objections against unconventional forms of warfare, characteristic of nomad operations and their manner of fighting. They do not apply to all enemies.

There are, however, in Ammianus's view, also negative characteristics applying to all foreigners, not just nomads. Thus '(all) barbarians are of unstable loyalty' and 'Chondomas, like all barbarians, was as submissive in disaster as he was the opposite in success'.⁴⁶ Non-Romans, it appears, have no character. When victorious they are over-confident; in defeat they become spineless. They have no self-control. They are all inherently disloyal and inconstant. *Fides* and *constantia* are qualities reserved for Romans, which is not to say that all Romans have them, but that all non-Romans lack them.⁴⁷ Another quality which foreigners are regarded as lacking is rationality. As Themistius (fourth century) asserts: 'There is in each of us a barbarian tribe, extremely overbearing and intractable — I mean the temper and the insatiate desires, which stand opposed to the rational elements as the Scythians [i.e. the Goths] and Germans do to the Romans.'⁴⁸

However, more alien and horrifying than any of the peoples mentioned so far were the Huns who are also the subject of an excursus by Ammianus.⁴⁹ This is not

⁴⁵ Zosimus, *Historia nova*, 4. 20. 4; cf. François Paschoud, *Zosime, Histoire Nouvelle*, II. 2 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1979), p. 372 n. 142. Ammianus, who describes the Alani as resembling the Huns but less savage, says that their 'young men who are used to riding from their earliest boyhood, regard it as below their dignity to go on foot; and all are trained in various manners to be skilled warriors' (*Res gestae*, 31. 2. 20).

⁴⁶ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 18. 2. 18: 'ut sunt fluxioris fidei barbari'; 16. 12. 61: 'Utque nativo more sunt barbari humiles in adversis, disparesque in secundis'.

⁴⁷ Such accusations were aimed at many peoples. See Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, pp. 412–14: Gauls; pp. 331, 393: Greeks; p. 331: Phoenicians; p. 349: Syrians and Africans; p. 365: Egyptians.

⁴⁸ Themistius, *Oratio*, 10. 199/131, as translated by Peter Heather and John Matthews, *The Goths in the Fourth Century* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1991), pp. 38–39.

⁴⁹ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 31. 2. Otto J. Maenchen-Helfen, *The World of the Huns: Studies in their History and Culture*, ed. by Max Knight (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), pp. 9–15; W. Richter, 'Die Darstellung der Hunnen bei Ammianus Marcellinus', *Historia*, 23 (1974), 343–72 (p. 374), who rejects the reliability of Ammianus altogether: 'der ganze Exkurs ist eine ethnographische Fiktion'. On the Huns in general there are also the antiquated works of Edward A. Thompson, *A History of Attila and the Huns* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948; rev. repr. 1996) and Franz Altheim, *Attila und die Hunnen* (Baden Baden: Kunst und Wissenschaft, 1951), both superseded by Maenchen-Helfen. For the archaeological material there is István Bóna, *Das Hunnenreich* (Stuttgart: Theiss, 1991); for the impact of the Hunnic presence on the Goths, see Peter J. Heather, *The Goths* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), chap. 4. Most recently, see Timo Stickler, *Die Hunnen* (Munich: Beck, 2007). See also Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*

a text about a people subjected long ago and has therefore none of the anachronisms encountered in the treatment of Gaul and Arabia. However, his description of the Huns follows in part stereotypical impressions of nomads in earlier sources.⁵⁰

They [...] are so monstrously ugly and misshapen, that one might take them for two-legged beasts or for the stumps, rough-hewn into images that are used in putting sides to bridges. But although they have the form of men, however ugly, they are so hardy in their mode of life that they have no need of fire nor of savory food, but eat the roots of wild plants and the half-raw flesh of any kind of animal whatever, which they put between their thighs and the backs of their horses, and thus warm it a little.⁵¹

This is a variant of a familiar stereotype already noted. Pomponius Mela (fl. 40) asserted that the Germans ate raw meat.⁵² It is interesting to see that the features of the Huns evoked such strong feelings.⁵³ They are, in fact, the only people encountered in Ammianus's work whose external appearance alone elicited such extreme language, although Ammianus implies that they are after all not real animals but human beings. That said, Ammianus explains that their way of life also is hardly human. They did not know fire and therefore ate only raw food, including their meat.⁵⁴ The notion that they warmed their meat a little by putting it between their thighs and the backs of their horses combines the stereotypical view of the way of life of nomads with the idea that such people lacked the habits of basic civilization, including fire.⁵⁵ Thus they represent a pre-Promethean phase of

Marcellinus, pp. 332–42. This paper discusses only a selection of the sources referring to the Huns and ignores many relevant texts, such as, for instance, Jerome, *Epistulae* 60. 16, 78. 8.

⁵⁰ See Maenchen-Helfen, *The World of the Huns*, pp. 14–15.

⁵¹ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 31. 2. 1: 'In hominum autem figura, licet insuavi, ita victu sunt asperi, ut neque igni neque saporatis indigeant cibis, sed radicibus herbarum agrestium, et semicruda cuiusvis pecoris carne vescantur, quam inter femora sua equorumque terga subsertam, fotu calefaciunt brevi.'

⁵² Pomponius Mela, *De chorographia*, 3. 3. 2. Ammianus's claim concerning the Huns was taken over by Jerome, *Adversus Iovinianum*, 2. 7 (Patrologia Latina, ed. by J.-P. Migne and others (Paris, 1844–64), 23, col. 295).

⁵³ Cf. Maenchen-Helfen, *The World of the Huns*, pp. 360–64, for the physical appearance of the Huns in ancient sources.

⁵⁴ Shaw, "Eaters of flesh", pp. 3–52.

⁵⁵ Maenchen-Helfen, *The World of the Huns*, pp. 14–15, points out that Ammianus's description is a mixture of good observation and a traditional topos. That they ate the roots of wild plants is quite credible; that they warmed raw meat while on horseback might be true, for the custom is attested for a later period. However, they did know the use of fire, of course.

development. These features come in addition to their repulsive external appearance.

Ammianus's brief treatment of the Huns should be compared with the later treatment in Jordanes, *Getica*, which is based on Cassiodorus (c. 485–c. 585).⁵⁶

But after a short space of time [...] the race of the Huns, fiercer than ferocity itself, flamed forth against the Goths. We learn from old traditions that their origin was as follows: Filimers, king of the Goths [...] found among his people certain witches. [...] Suspecting these women, he expelled them from the midst of his race and compelled them to wander in solitary exile afar from his army. There the unclean spirits, who beheld them as they wandered through the wilderness, gave themselves to the women's embraces in sexual intercourse and produced this savage race, which dwelt at first in the swamps — a stunted, hideous and puny tribe, scarcely human, unrecognizable by any language save something which bore only slight resemblance to human speech. Such was the descent of the Huns who came to the country of the Goths.⁵⁷

For by the terror of their features they inspired great fear in those whom perhaps they did not really surpass in war. They made their foes flee in horror because their swarthy aspect was fearful, and they had, if I may call it so, a sort of hideous lump, not a head, with pinholes rather than eyes. Their audacity is evident in their threatening appearance, and they are beings who are cruel to their children on the very day they are born. [...] They are short in stature, quick in bodily movement; alert horsemen, broad shouldered, ready in the use of bow and arrow, and have firm-set necks which are ever erect in pride. Though they have human shape, they live with the savagery of beasts.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ For Jordanes's *Getica*, see Peter J. Heather, *Goths and Romans 332–489* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), chaps 1 and 2; for the date, see Brian Croke, 'Cassiodorus and the *Getica* of Jordanes', *CPh*, 82 (1987), 117–34 (mid-sixth century).

⁵⁷ Jordanes, *Getica*, 121: 'Post autem non longi temporis intervallum, ut refert Orosius, Hunnorum gens omni ferocitate atrocior exarsit in Gothos. Nam hos, ut refert antiquitas, ita exstittisse comperimus: Filimer, rex Gothorum [...] repperit in populo suo quasdam magas mulieres, [...] easque habens suspectas, de medio sui proturbat longeque ab exercitu suo fugatas in solitudinem coegit errare. Quas spiritus immundi per heremum vagantes quum vidissent et earum se complexibus in coitu miscuissent, genus hoc ferocissimum ediderunt, quae fuit primum inter paludes, minutum, taetrum atque exile quasi hominum genus, nec alia voce notum nisi quod humani sermonis imaginem assignabat. Tali igitur Hunni stirpe creati, Gothorum finibus advenerunt.' See Maenchen-Helfen, *The World of the Huns*, pp. 244–51, for a suggestion regarding the background of the tale. See also A. S. Christensen, *Cassiodorus, Jordanes and the History of the Goths: Studies in a Migration Myth* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2002), pp. 241–42.

⁵⁸ Jordanes, *Getica*, 127–28: 'Nam et quos bello forsitan minime superabant, vultus sui terrore nimium pavorem ingerentes, terribilitate fugabant, eo quod erat eis species pavenda nigredinis et velut quaedam, si dici fas est, informis offa, non facies, habensque magis puncta quam lumina. Quorum animi fiduciam torvus prodit aspectus, qui etiam in pignora sua primo die nata desaeviunt.

The Huns then were descendants of Gothic witches who were expelled from the community of Goths and of unclean spirits, living in the wilderness. Such an effort to denigrate ancestry reminds us to some extent of the distorted version of the Exodus story in Hellenistic sources and Tacitus which claim that the Jews in Judaea were the descendants of impious lepers, expelled from Egypt to the desert.⁵⁹ In this insistence on poor lineage the Huns were claimed to be a truly separate, savage race in every modern sense of the term. They ‘dwelt at first in the swamps — a stunted, hideous and puny tribe, scarcely human, unrecognizable by any language, save something which bore only slight resemblance to human speech’. The horror of their external appearance echoes that of Ammianus. Their language too is regarded as scarcely human. Their victory is due more to the enemy’s fear of their appearance than to actual military merit.⁶⁰ Then, hardly consistent, the text claims that their outward shape may be human, but their savagery is animal. So far Jordanes, relying on an earlier source.

Back to Ammianus — he displays the hazy impression of a nomadic way of life usually found in ancient sources, concluding that they are treacherous: ‘Like unreasoning beasts, they are utterly ignorant of the difference between right and wrong; they are deceitful and ambiguous in speech, never bound by any reverence for religion or for other religious beliefs.’⁶¹ They have no morals. Claudian compares them with centaurs, themselves half animals and half human beings. They literally have a double nature.⁶²

[...] Exigui quidem forma, sed argutis motibus expediti et ad equitandum promptissimi, scapulis latis, et ad arcus sagittasque parati, firmis cervicibus et superbia semper erectis. Hi vero sub hominum figura vivunt beluina saevitia.’

⁵⁹ Benjamin Isaac, ‘The Ancient Mediterranean and the Pre-Christian Era’, in *Antisemitism: A History*, ed. by Albert S. Lindeman and Richard S. Levy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 34–64.

⁶⁰ This is not to deny that the Huns really caused terror on the battlefield; see, for instance, Procopius, *De bello Vandalico*, 3. 13–19.

⁶¹ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 32. 2. 10: ‘Per indutias infidi et inconstantes, ad omnem auram incidentis spei novae perquam mobiles, totum furori incitatissimo tribuentes. Inconsultorum animalium ritu, quid honestum inhonestumve sit, penitus ignorantes, flexiloqui et obscuri, nullius religionis vel superstitionis reverentia aliquando districti’ (cf. Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus Marcellinus*, p. 340).

⁶² Claudianus, *In Rufinum*, 1. 329–30: ‘nec plus nubigenas duplex natura biforems | cognatis aptavit equis’.

The Huns are said to be unproductive and have no homes. Ammianus claims that ‘no one in their country ever plows a field or touches a plow-handle’.⁶³ This derives from a description of the Scythians by Pompeius Trogus:

The people have no landmarks, for they neither cultivate the soil, nor have they any house, dwelling, or settled place of abode, but are always engaged in feeding herds and flocks, and wandering through uncultivated deserts. They carry their wives and children with them in wagons, which, as they are covered with hides against the rain and cold, they use instead of houses.⁶⁴

Ammianus similarly describes the constant roaming of the Alans:

They have no cottages, and never use the plough, but live solely on meat and plenty of milk, mounted on their wagons, which they cover with a curved awning made of the bark of trees, and then drive them through their boundless deserts. And when they come to any pasture-land, they pitch their wagons in a circle, and live like a herd of beasts, eating up all the forage — carrying, as it were, their cities with them in their wagons.⁶⁵

This description combines a series of familiar themes: the nomads have no homes, do not work on the fields, and are not productive, but live off their animals consuming meat and milk. They are therefore like animals.

Otto J. Maenchen-Helfen has shown that, in spite of the denial of ancient and also modern literature, the Huns did in fact practise agriculture, spin wool, and make linen. Yet it was commonly assumed in ancient sources that nomads produce nothing and consume only. As Aristotle asserts in his discussion of the various modes of production and consumption of humanity, ‘The idlest men are nomads (for to procure food from domesticated animals involves not toil or industry, but as it is necessary for the herds to move from place to place because of the pastures,

⁶³ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 30. 2. 10: ‘Nemo apud eos arat nec stivam aliquando contingit.’ Cf. Claudianus, *In Rufinum*, 1. 327. Maenchen-Helfen, *The World of the Huns*, pp. 174–78.

⁶⁴ Justinus, *Epitome*, 2. 2. 3–4: ‘Hominibus inter se nulli fines. Neque enim agrum exercent, nec domus illis ulla aut tectum aut sedes est, armenta et pecora semper pascentibus et per incultas solitudines errare solitis. Uxores liberosque secum in plaustis uehunt, quibus coriis imbrum hiemisque causa tectis pro domibus utuntur.’

⁶⁵ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 31. 2. 18: ‘Bipertiti per utramque mundi plagam Halani — quorum gentes varias nunc recensere non refert — licet dirempti spatiis longis, per pagos ut Nomades vagantur immensos, aevi tamen progressu ad unum concessere vocabulum et summatim omnes Halani cognominantur ob mores et modum efferatum vivendi eandemque armaturam. 18. nec enim ulla sunt illisce tuguria aut versandi vomeris cura, sed carne et copia victitant lactis, plaustis supersidentes, quae operimentis curvatis corticum per solitudines conferunt sine fine distentas.’

the people themselves are forced to follow along with them, as though they were farming a live farm').⁶⁶ The idea that the nomads are idle is the distant predecessor of the accusation aimed at other peoples in conflict situations, such as the Jews, that they are unproductive, living as parasites on the backs of other people.

We observe a constantly repeated ambivalence about the humanity of the Huns; their physical shape, origin, and language are dubious, but also their morals: they are fickle, savage, and have no true religion. Like other nomads, they lack any social organization or regular economy and, like animals, eat their food raw. This fully fits the concept of a proto-racist attitude towards foreigners, for a reasoned, consistent, and emphatic denial of other people's humanity is what distinguishes racism from hostile ethnic stereotype. It transforms vague hostility into a well-defined ideology.

In Ammianus's work this approach recurs in remarks about peoples who lived beyond the Alans, 'the Vidini and the Geloni, exceedingly savage races, who strip the skins from their slain enemies to make clothing for themselves and coverings for their horses in war'.⁶⁷ This is a curious variant of an accusation of cannibalism, creating a fantasy world of nomadic cruelty. The employment of human skins for garments or other practical use is like the association of nomadism with the drinking of human blood, found also in earlier sources, and ultimately goes back again to Herodotus's excursus on the Scythians.⁶⁸

'And when they come to a place rich in grass, they place their carts in a circle and feed like wild beasts.'⁶⁹ It is not quite clear how we are supposed to imagine the feeding habits of the Vidini and Geloni. Were they eating grass? In any case their customs definitely placed them well beyond the bounds of humanity. However, an

⁶⁶ Aristoteles, *Politica*, 1256 a. See the analysis by Shaw, "Eaters of flesh", pp. 17–20.

⁶⁷ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 32. 2. 17: 'Post quos Vidini sunt et Geloni, perquam feri, qui detractis peremptorum hostium cutibus, indumenta sibi equisque tegmina conficiunt bellatoria.' Cf. Pomponius Mela, *De chorographia*, 2. 1. 14.

⁶⁸ Herodotus, *Historiae*, 4. 64; cf. comments by Corcella, *Erodoto*, pp. 285–86. It recurs in Pliny's *Naturalis historia*, 7. 12, a separate chapter on cannibalism, and in Pomponius Mela, *De chorographia*, 2. 14, who, like Ammianus, associates it with the Geloni. Cf. *Pomponius Mela*, ed., trans., and annotated by Silberman, pp. 171–72 n. 3. Strabo reports having heard that the inhabitants of Ireland were cannibals and regarded it as honourable to devour their fathers after they died (*Geographica*, 4. 5. 4 (201)), an assertion found first in Herodotus, *Historiae*, 4. 26 concerning the Essedonians (above, note 35).

⁶⁹ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 32. 2. 18: 'Cumque ad graminea venerint in orbiculatam figuram locatis sarracis ferino ritu vescuntur.'

extraordinarily repulsive form of bestiality, in the classical tradition, is cannibalism (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1148b).

Ammianus also mentions having heard of nomadic cannibals (*Anthropophagi*) living beyond the Alans, in the huge realm between them and the Chinese.⁷⁰ The expression 'as I have heard' (*accepimus*) suggests contemporary, personal information, but in fact the report again echoes Herodotus.⁷¹ Ammianus adds a note saying that all their former neighbours have moved away from them because of their repulsive feeding habits. This is a statement not found in Herodotus in this form. The latter describes them as 'a people separate and by no means Scythian. Beyond them there is only true desolation, where no group of men lives, as far as we know.'⁷² For Herodotus then they were the most remote of men displaying a commensurate lack of civilization. For Ammianus their cannibalism drove away their less brutish neighbours and led to complete isolation. In other words, Herodotus sees their remoteness as the cause of their lack of culture, while Ammianus regards this lack as the cause of their isolation.⁷³

Even if much in these reports is based on earlier texts, the treatment of hostile peoples at the edge of the empire or beyond it definitely is formulated as if it depicts Ammianus's own times. The author in fact claims to describe only what he has seen himself even where only a small part of a description may be based on autopsy.⁷⁴ As I emphasize again and again, stereotypes are far from meaningless: they reflect what is commonly accepted as true and are a symptom of the failure to employ critical, independent thought and basic rules of objective observation. The foreign peoples dealt with in this manner, especially the nomads, are consistently described in terms that question or almost deny their humanity in various respects:

⁷⁰ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 31. 2. 15: 'Post hos Melanchlaenas et Anthropophagos palari accepimus per diversa, humanis corporibus victitantes, quibus ob haec alimenta nefanda desertis, finitimi omnes longa petiere terrarum.'

⁷¹ Herodotus, *Historiae*, 4. 106: 'The *androphagoi* are the most savage of all men; they do not respect justice and respect no lawful customs. They are nomads and [...] are the only ones recorded as eating men.' The earliest representation of cannibalism in Greek literature is the story of the cyclops: Homer, *Odyseia*, 9. 106 and cf. the analysis by Shaw, "Eaters of flesh", pp. 21–24.

⁷² Herodotus, *Historiae*, 4. 18.

⁷³ Another distinction is that for Herodotus these people lived at the edge of the world, while Ammianus was aware of the Seres (Chinese), living far to the East.

⁷⁴ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 27. 4. 2: 'Sufficiet ea meminisse quae vidisse meminimus expedit'. Yet in the subsequent chapter he cites Homer and refers to the past more than to the present.

physical, moral, social, religious, and cultural. Thus these attitudes should be termed an ideology rather than a random collection of prejudices or stereotypes. As such they should be regarded as a form of racism.

If we recognize here a pattern of ancient racism as encountered in earlier centuries as well, do we also encounter the early scientific theories which formed the intellectual basis for the rationalization of prejudice and collective hostility? Two examples will at least indicate that the theories were still around and to some extent influential. Vegetius is the last author in antiquity known to me as having given, in adapted form, the standard formulation of environmental determinism. As in earlier texts, it occurs in a technical treatise, the *Epitome of Military Science* (late fourth–early fifth century):

They tell us that all peoples that are near the sun, being parched by great heat, are more intelligent but have less blood, and therefore lack steadiness and confidence to fight at close quarters, because those who are conscious of having less blood are afraid of wounds. On the other hand the peoples of the north, remote from the sun's heat are less intelligent, but having a superabundance of blood are readiest for wars. Recruits should therefore be raised from the more temperate climes. The plenteousness of their blood gives them contempt for wounds and death, and intelligence cannot be lacking either which preserves discipline in camp and is of no little assistance with counsel in battle.⁷⁵

This is environmental determinism in its classic form. The differences between northern and southern climates have consequences for the physical qualities of the population as well as for their mental and moral characteristics. Those living in the middle, in a temperate climate, display the best of both, an idea first enunciated by Aristotle. The immediate occasion for Vegetius to raise the topic is to show where the best soldiers may be recruited.

It recurs at least once in the extant work of Ammianus:

Now it is well known, as constant reports have spread abroad, that almost all the country folk who dwell in the high mountains throughout the lands just described surpass us in health and strength, and in the prerogative (so to speak) of prolonging life; and it is

⁷⁵ Vegetius, *Epitoma rei militaris*, 1. 2 (Vegetius, *Epitome of Military Science*, trans. with notes and intro. by N. P. Milner (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1993)): 'Omnes nationes, quae uicinae sunt soli, nimio calore siccatae, amplius quidem sapere, sed minus habere sanguinis dicunt ac propterea constantiam ac fiduciam comminus non habere pugnandi, quia metuunt uulnera qui exiguum sanguinem se habere nouerunt. Contra septentrionales populi, remoti a solis ardoribus, inconsultiores quidem, sed tamen largo sanguine redundantes, sunt ad bella promptissimi. Tirones igitur de temperatioribus legendi sunt plagis, quibus et copia sanguinis suppetat ad uulnerum mortis que contemptum et non possit deesse prudentia, quae et modestiam seruat in castris et non parum prodest in dimicatione consiliis.' Cf. Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, p. 87.

thought that this is due to abstinence from a conglomeration of diet and from hot baths,⁷⁶ and a lasting freshness knits their bodies through cold sprinklings with dew; and they enjoy the sweetness of a purer air; further they are first of all to feel the rays of the sun.⁷⁷

This is environmental determinism, focusing on the opposition between mountain dwellers and plainsmen, a variant encountered already in the fifth century BCE.⁷⁸ The beneficial influence of the mountain climate is combined with a healthy way of life resulting in superior physical qualities for the local population. The harmfulness of hot baths is a familiar theme in the ancient literature from Posidonius onwards,⁷⁹ but that is a matter of lifestyle, not of the environment. The collective influence of the quality of air and quantity of moisture on the physical and mental characteristics of peoples is a long-standing concept. Yet, it is possible that environmental determinism lost some of its force in this period, for it seems to be less prevalent in the texts than in earlier centuries. Another concept that makes itself felt less regularly than in the past is the theory of natural slavery in its later development.⁸⁰ The influence of Greek medical and philosophical thinking on ethnographic thinking may have weakened in the course of the third and fourth centuries, but this requires further study.

Conclusion

In this paper I hope to have shown the presence of a clear pattern in the views of the Roman Empire and of various foreign peoples in the fourth century. Ammianus describes the development over time of the collective of the empire in terms of the existence of an individual rather than a group. He combines this with the certainty, familiar from Graeco-Roman culture, that the progress of time can only

⁷⁶ Or: hot food. There is a textual problem here; cf. Ammien Marcellin, *Histoire*, V, ed. by Marie-Anne Marié (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1984), p. 248 n. 214.

⁷⁷ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae*, 27. 4. 14: 'Constat autem [...] omnes paene agrestes, qui per regiones praedictas montium circumcolunt altitudines, salubriate virium et praerogativa quadam vitae longius propagandae, nos anteire, idque inde coningere arbitrantur, quod colluvione ciborum abstinere calidisque, et perenni viriditate roris asperginibus gelidis corpora constringente, aurae purioris dulcedine potiuntur, radiosque solis [...] primi omnium sentiunt.'

⁷⁸ Herodotus, *Historiae*, 9. 122; Pseudo-Hippocrates, *De aeribus, aquis, locis*, 24. 2–3 with special reference to air and moisture. Cf. Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, chap. 10.

⁷⁹ Posidonius fragm. 61a, b Kidd (in Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae*, 12. 540B–C, 5. 210C–D); fragm. 62a, b (in Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae*, 12. 527E–F, 5. 210E–F).

⁸⁰ See Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, pp. 170–94.

bring deterioration, not improvement. His excursions on provincial peoples tend to be anachronistic: Gaul and parts of the Near East are described as if they had just been annexed; subsequent developments over the centuries are ignored. Much of this paper, however, is devoted to fourth-century views, not of the empire, but of nomadic peoples and pastoralists. The Saracens are described in terms that make them less than fully human: there are animal comparisons; they are half-naked, do not live in houses, are unproductive, and do not have regular marriages. The theme of drinking human blood comes up at least once. The Thracians, described in extremely anachronistic terms, practise human sacrifice and drink human blood out of skulls. This is far removed from the admiration which Herodotus expressed in the fifth century.⁸¹ The treatment of the Isaurians is replete with animal comparisons. A common accusation aimed at all nomads is that they do not fight honestly. Guerilla tactics are seen not as a different manner of fighting, but as a despicable and cowardly form of soldiering. This fits the view, expressed by Ammianus, that all foreigners are lacking *fides* and *constantia*. All these features are applied with particular force to the treatment of the Huns in the fourth and fifth centuries. Their external appearance is not human. They are of unnatural descent. They have no fire, no homes, no morals, no religion, and produce nothing. Indeed they are a sort of centaurs, half horses, half human beings.

All this leads me to conclude that we encounter here a consistent and coherent pattern which places the nomads in a category apart. They are inferior in every respect, and they are so by nature and pass on their inferiority from one generation to the next. These views display a gradual scale from superiority to inferiority, dividing groups of peoples into classes where those least regarded are associated with animals or classified as less than fully human. The repetition of specific themes is coherent and can legitimately be seen as an ideology based on an early form of racism.

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⁸¹ Herodotus, *Historiae*, 5.3: 'The Thracians are the most powerful people in the world except, of course, the Indians; and if they had one head, or were agreed among themselves, it is my belief that their match could not be found anywhere, and that they would very far surpass all other nations.'

WHO IS A GOOD ROMAN? SETTING AND RESETTING BOUNDARIES FOR ROMANS, CHRISTIANS, PAGANS, AND BARBARIANS IN THE LATE ROMAN EMPIRE

Maijastina Kahlos

[...] men did not leave off being Romans when they became Christians.

Charles Witke¹

In the course of the Christianization of the Roman Empire, the criteria for being a good Roman were changed. A Roman was redefined as being a Christian and, moreover, the right kind of Christian. Non-Christians ('pagans') as well as Christian dissidents ('heretics') were othered outside of Roman civilization. This article conducts a survey of the conceptions of a good Roman and a loyal citizen in Late Antiquity and examines how Romanness was delineated in terms of religion.

Membership in the Community and the Markers of Loyalty

In order to understand the changes during the late empire, we must look at the relationship between the Roman state and religion. In Roman society, religion was intimately connected with the public exercising of power. Consequently, in the minds of the Romans, a good Roman was suitably pious, that is, performed rituals and worshipped the gods in the correct way. This was thought to guarantee the welfare of the empire.²

¹ Charles Witke, *Numen litterarum: The Old and the New in Latin Poetry From Constantine to Gregory the Great* (Leiden: Brill, 1971), p. 110.

² The connection between the correct performance of cult and the well-being of the community is by no means a Roman idiosyncrasy, but this mode of thinking has prevailed in many

Communities often define their membership through common participation in a series of religious rituals. Those who do not take part in the public rituals are excluded from the community.³ During the republican and early imperial periods, the most important indicator of membership in Roman society and the marker of loyalty was participation in the sacrificial system of community. Thus, a good Roman was supposed to take part in the sacrificial rituals of the community.⁴ As the marker of loyalty, participation in the rituals of community was often connected with the welfare of the community.

Roman Citizenship and Religion

The connection between the correct performance of religion and Roman citizenship was particularly stressed and articulated from the third century onwards. In the *Constitutio Antoniniana* in 212, Emperor Caracalla granted citizenship to all free provincials and pronounced *religio* as the basis of Roman citizenship.⁵ It is stressed that *peregrini*, having attained citizenship, join the service of the gods with the emperor and Roman citizens:

I believe, therefore, that I can perform a [magnificent and reverent] service worthy of their majesty if I gather to their rites [as Romans] all the people who have entered the number of my subjects.⁶

historical societies and can be detected as a subconscious presupposition even in modern Western societies, even though the argumentation may be more subtle. In classical Athens, for instance, one's identity as a worshipper of the gods was also one's identity as a citizen: see Robert Parker, *Polytheism and Society at Athens* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), esp. p. 453.

³ Martin Goodman, *Mission and Conversion: Proselytizing in the Religious History of the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), p. 16.

⁴ For the significance of sacrifice, see Mary Beard, John North, and Simon Price, *Religions of Rome*, 1: *A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 239–40, and Richard Gordon, 'Religion in the Roman Empire: The Civic Compromise and its Limits', in *Pagan Priests*, ed. by Mary Beard and John North (London: Duckworth, 1990), pp. 233–55 (pp. 253–55).

⁵ Hervé Inglebert, 'Citoyenneté romaine, romanités et identités romaines sous l'empire', in *Idéologies et valeurs civiques dans le Monde Romain: Hommage à Claude Lepelley*, ed. by Hervé Inglebert (Paris: Picard, 2002), pp. 241–60 (p. 244) states that *religio* became the only official basis of Roman civic identity.

⁶ For Caracalla's edict, see Hartmut Wolff, *Die Constitutio Antoniniana und Papyrus Gissensis 40 I* (Cologne: Oldenburg, 1976) and Christoph Sasse, *Die Constitutio Antoniniana* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1958). The text is extant in a Greek papyrus (Papyrus Gissensis 40. I).

Hence, the Emperor expresses his hope that the Roman people united under the cult of the gods would ensure the continued blessings of the gods for Rome. Caracalla's edict *Constitutio Antoniniana* is a part of a broader project to bring together the peoples of the Roman Empire under common religious and legal traditions. There is a simultaneous effort to draw the entire population of the empire under the umbrella of Roman law.⁷ Emperor Diocletian continued this trend, setting traditional piety — or rather, what he propagated as traditional piety — as the basis of Romanness in his proclaimed policy of restoration.⁸

Defining Romanness in religious terms was a fundamental part of the political debate from Caracalla onwards. The actions of Emperor Decius in 249–50, Emperor Valerian in 257–58, and the tetrarchs in 304 were part of this inclination to link the particular type of cult practices to Roman loyalty and identity. Decius, Valerian, and the tetrarchs ordered a universal obligation to perform Roman rites or make sacrifices to the Roman gods.⁹

Christian Groups and the Issue of Loyalty

During the early empire, Christian groups found themselves in tricky situations from time to time because they did not do what good Romans were supposed to do: they did not take part in sacrificial rituals. Participation in sacrifices became an

⁷ Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, *The Making of a Christian Empire: Lactantius & Rome* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), p. 4, interprets the handbook on Roman jurisprudence by Ulpian as part of the broader Severan project to unite the peoples of the empire under common legal as well as religious traditions; see also Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, 'Religion, Law and the Roman Polity: The Era of the Great Persecution', in *Religion and Law in Classical and Christian Rome*, ed. by Clifford Ando and Jörg Rüpke (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2006), pp. 68–84 (pp. 69–71).

⁸ Simultaneously, Diocletian's jurists delivered two compilations of Roman law in four years (291–95). DePalma Digeser, *Making of a Christian Empire*, p. 4; DePalma Digeser, 'Religion, Law and the Roman Polity', pp. 70–71.

⁹ In the words of Beard, North, and Price, *Religions of Rome*, I, 239, 'sacrifice delimited and paraded the true subjects of Rome'. None of the edicts are extant although they are referred to by Christian writers. For the problems of interpreting the Christian sources, see James B. Rives, 'The Decree of Decius and the Religion of Empire', *JRS*, 89 (1999), 135–54; J.-L. Voisin, 'Monter au Capitole: remarques à propos de l'édit de Dèce de 250', in *Romanité et cité chrétienne: permanences et mutations, intégration et exclusion du I^{er} au VI^e siècle. Mélanges en l'honneur d'Yvette Duval* (Paris: De Boccard, 2000), pp. 197–218; and Maijastina Kahlos, *Forbearance and Compulsion: The Rhetoric of Religious Tolerance and Intolerance in Late Antiquity* (London: Duckworth, 2009), pp. 28–33.

issue of loyalty. Because of their refusal to make sacrifices to the gods of the community, Christians were often branded as atheists.¹⁰

Worship of the Roman gods was considered the principal criterion of Roman-ness, as Tertullian's complaint shows: 'We outrage the Romans and we are not regarded as Romans since we do not worship the gods of the Romans.'¹¹ Various features of antisocial behaviour were associated with Christians: they assembled in secrecy in the manner of clandestine conspiracies, they refused to swear oaths (by the names of Roman gods), they refused military service and administrative posts, and they even proclaimed that they were waiting for another empire to emerge.¹²

Those Christian authors who wrote defences on behalf of their Christian communities attempted to assure their readers of the Christians' loyalty to the Roman state, stressing that Christians acknowledged the supremacy of the Roman state and they never opposed the emperor.¹³ For example, the writer of *Letter to Diognetus* claimed that Christians played their full part as citizens but admitted that at the same time they were treated as if they were aliens:

The difference between Christians and the rest of humankind is not a matter of nationality, or language, or customs. [...] though they are residents at home in their own countries, their behaviour there is more like that of transients (*paroikoi*); they take their full part as citizens (*politai*), but they also submit to anything and everything as if they were aliens (*ksenoi*). For them, any foreign country is a motherland, and motherland is a foreign country.¹⁴

In the fluctuating circumstances of the third century, Christians were at times even labelled as public enemies (*hostes publici*); Lactantius reports that during the tetrarchic persecution Christians were treated as such.¹⁵ In the imperial proclamations

¹⁰ The charge of atheism appears in, e.g., Origenes, *Contra Celsum*, 7. 62–63. Religiously deviant groups and foreigners could be branded as godless, *superstitiosi*, *impii*, and atheists.

¹¹ Tertullianus, *Apologeticum*, 24. 9. Translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.

¹² Justinus Martyr, *1. apologia*, 11.

¹³ Justinus Martyr, *1. apologia*, 17. 1–3; Tatianus, *Oratio*, 4. 2; Tertullianus, *Apologeticum*, 42. 9; Tertullianus, *Ad Scapulam*, 2.

¹⁴ *Ad Diognetum*, 5. Trans. in Francis Young, 'Greek Apologists of the Second Century', in *Apologetics in the Roman Empire: Pagans, Jews, and Christians*, ed. by Mark Edwards, Martin Goodman, and Simon Price, in association with Christopher Rowland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 81–129 (p. 102).

¹⁵ Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum*, 14: 'Christiani arguebantur velut hostes publici' (Lactance, *De la mort des persécuteurs*, 1, ed. by Jacques Moreau, Sources chrétiennes, 39 (Paris: Cerf, 1954)).

of the tetrarchs (Diocletian, Galerius, Maximinus Daia), the welfare of the community was connected with the continuation of the traditional cults.¹⁶ Christian apologists replied to the charges of disloyalty by saying that Christians prayed for the *salus* of the emperors and for the well-being of the empire, and this confirmed their loyalty to the state.¹⁷ Tertullian asserts that, as a matter of fact, the Christian prayer for the welfare of the emperor (*salus Augusti*) was the only efficient prayer because it was addressed to the true god.¹⁸

Christian writers report how Christians were regarded as a third nation (*tertium genus, triton genos*) who were neither Greeks or Romans nor Jews.¹⁹ Consequently, they could be thought of as belonging nowhere, outside the human race. According to Eusebius of Caesarea, Christians were often asked whether they were Greeks or barbarians and whether there could be anything between these two groups.²⁰ Furthermore, the idea of the *tertium genus* set the Roman in opposition to the Christian.²¹ Christian apologists argued against this contradiction.

¹⁶ Diocletian's ruling against Manichaeans: *Mosaicarum et Romanarum legum collatio*, 15. 3. 2–3; *Fontes Iuris Romani Antejustiniani*, II, 580–81; A. D. Lee, *Pagans and Christians in Late Antiquity: A Sourcebook* (London: Duckworth, 2000), p. 66. Galerius's declaration of 311 in Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum*, 34. 1–5, and Maximinus Daia's letter in Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 9. 7.

¹⁷ For example, Theophilus, *Ad Autolycum*, 1. 11; Athenagoras, *Legatio pro Christianis*, 37. 2–3; Tertullianus, *Apologeticum*, 30. 4; Cyprianus, *Ad Demetrianum*, 20; Arnobius, *Adversus nationes*, 4. 36. Michael Fiedrowicz, *Apologie im frühen Christentum: Die Kontroverse um den christlichen Wahrheitsanspruch in den ersten Jahrhunderten* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2000), pp. 197–98.

¹⁸ Tertullianus, *Apologeticum*, 29. 5–30. 1, 33. 2; Tertullianus, *Ad Scapulam*, 2. 9. The issue of prayer was to re-emerge in the early fourth century (see below).

¹⁹ The idea of Christians as a new nation that transcends the dichotomy of Greeks and Jews came originally from Apostle Paul; see J.-C. Fredouille, 'Heiden', in *RAC*, XIII (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1986), pp. 1113–49 (p. 1133), and Guy G. Stroumsa, 'Philosophy of the Barbarians: On Early Christian Ethnological Representations', in *Geschichte — Tradition — Reflexion: Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70. Geburtstag II*, ed. by Hubert Cancik, Hermann Lichtenberger, and Peter Schäfer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), pp. 339–68 (pp. 340–42). For discussion on the ethno-racial discourse in early Christian texts, see Denise Kimber Buell, *Why This New Race: Ethnic Reasoning in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

²⁰ Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica*, 1. 2. 1. Eusebius has set out to write his *Praeparatio evangelica* in order to explain who Christians are since Christians are seen to agree with neither the opinions of the Greeks nor the customs of the barbarians.

²¹ As Marta Sordi, *The Christians and the Roman Empire*, trans. by Annabel Bedini (London: Croom Helm, 1983), p. 168, remarks, to set Romans and Christians against each other meant

Tertullian protested against the idea of denying the Christians their Roman status.²² Instead, he suggested that Christians were the best kind of citizens and Romans: 'Christians are not a nation as such but they are Romans and even the best among the Romans.'²³ Lactantius even turns the charge over, re-evaluating the good Romans and the real enemies of the Romans. He argues that the emperors Galerius and Maximinus Daia are the persecutors and enemies of Christians because these emperors were barbarians and the enemies of the Romans.²⁴ Thus, Lactantius anticipates the identification of 'Christian' with 'Roman', a concept which was to become a characteristic of the Christian empire.

Prayer and Redefining Loyalty

In 311 in the aftermath of the tetrarchic persecution, Emperor Galerius made a proclamation in which he gave up his coercive religious policy and redefined religious loyalty in a manner that included the Christian cult.²⁵ This was an

either reducing *Romanitas* to being nothing more than a manifestation of a particular *ethnos* (which was actually contrary to Roman law, policy, and tradition) or labelling Christians as a nation of their own (as Julian did by calling them Galileans). During the empire, the epithet 'Roman' did not refer to a person's ethnicity, nation, linguistic group, or common descent, but it referred directly to a common citizenship. Ray Laurence, 'Introduction', in *Cultural Identity in the Roman Empire*, ed. by Ray Laurence and Joanne Berry (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 1–9 (p. 2).

²² Tertullianus, *Ad nationes*, 1. 8. 11: 'Sed de superstitione tertium genus deputatur, non de natura, ut sint Romani Iudaei et Christiani' (*Tertulliani Opera I*, ed. by August Reifferscheid and Georg Wissowa, CSEL, 20); also Tertullianus, *Apologeticum*, 24. 9. 26. 1.

²³ Tertullianus, *De scorpiace*, 10. Lellia Cracco Ruggini, 'Gli antichi e il diverso', in *L'intolleranza: uguali e diversi nella storia*, ed. by C. Bori (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1986), pp. 13–49 (p. 37).

²⁴ Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum*, 9. 2 on Galerius: 'Inerat huic bestiae naturalis barbaries, efferitas a Romano sanguine aliena' (Lactance, *De la mort des persécuteurs*, I, ed. by Moreau); 18. 13 on Maximinus Daia: 'adulescentem quendam semibarbarum'; 38. 3: 'barbaram libidinem deformitas insignis arcebat'. For the barbarity of the persecuting emperors in Lactantius's work, see Francesco Corsaro, 'Le *mos maiorum* dans la vision éthique et politique du *De mortibus persecutorum*', in *Lactance et son temps: recherches actuelles*, ed. by J. Fontaine and M. Perrin (Paris: Éditions Beauchesne, 1978), pp. 25–53 (pp. 34–35).

²⁵ The text is extant in the original Latin in Lactantius's *De mortibus persecutorum* (34) and in a Greek version in Eusebius's *Church History* (8. 17). Galerius signed the letter in Serdica, but it was published in Nicomedia. It was issued in the name of all *Augusti*, on 30 April 311, some time before Galerius died in May 311, and it was meant to be valid throughout the empire. In practice, its enforcement varied according to the territories controlled by each tetrarch.

attempt to work out the tensions between religion and citizenship. As a result of the tetrarchic policy, Christians 'were neither offering cult nor religious observance to the gods nor paying respect to the god of the Christians' as Galerius puts it in the proclamation.²⁶ Thus, Galerius implies that no religious observance at all would be more harmful to the state than the incorrect performance. He decrees that it is now the Christians'

duty to pray to their god for our [the emperors'] safety and for that of the state and for their own safety, so that from every side the *res publica* may be kept unharmed.²⁷

Thus, Galerius replaced the traditional religious loyalty based on *sacrifice* with the loyalty based on *prayer*.²⁸ The prayer for the emperor's safety now functioned as the marker of allegiance and political support.

The issue of religion and loyalty reappeared in the declaration of emperors Licinius and Constantine in 313 in which they granted freedom of religion to all and ordered the restoration of church property confiscated during the tetrarchic persecutions.²⁹ Licinius and Constantine defined Roman loyalty much in the same

²⁶ In Galerius's letter the tetrarchic persecution of Christians is expressed as an attempt to rectify everything in accordance with the ancient laws and public order of the Romans and restore the Christians, who had abandoned the institutions of their forefathers, to due order, to the right mindset. For the rhetoric of Galerius's letter, see Kahlos, *Forbearance and Compulsion*, pp. 33–34.

²⁷ Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum*, 34. 4–5: 'Atque cum plurimi in proposito perseverarent ac videremus nec diis eosdem cultum ac religionem debitam exhibere nec Christianorum deum observare, contemplatione mitissimae nostrae clementiae intuentes et consuetudinem sempiternam, qua solemus cunctis hominibus veniam indulgere, promptissimam in his quoque indulgentiam nostram credidimus porrigendam. Ut denuo sint Christiani et conventicula sua component, ita ut ne quid contra disciplinam agant. <Per> aliam autem epistolam iudicibus significaturi sumus quid debeant observare. Unde iuxta hanc indulgentiam nostram debebunt deum suum orare pro salute nostra et rei publicae ac sua, ut undique verum *res publica* praestetur incolumis et securi vivere in sedibus suis possint' (Lactance, *De la mort des persécuteurs*, I, ed. by Moreau). Galerius's letter is often called the edict of Serdica or Nicomedia or the 'Edict of Toleration'. DePalma Digeser, *Making of a Christian Empire*, p. 56, interprets Galerius's edict as 'truly revolutionary because it was the first measure to make Christianity a legal religion by redefining proper Roman worship in a way that Christians could perform'.

²⁸ See also the inscription of Arycanda (*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, ed. by Theodor Mommsen and others (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1893–), III, 12132, a petition addressed to Maximinus Daia by the province of Lycia and Pamphylia in 312) in which the prayer to the gods for the perpetual health of the emperors is accentuated. Stephen Mitchell, 'Maximinus and the Christians in A.D. 312: A New Latin Inscription', *JRS*, 78 (1988), 105–24 (p. 105).

²⁹ Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum*, 48. 3; also Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 10. 5. Licinius and Constantine agreed on a general religious policy in the provinces under their dominion

way as Galerius had. It was a compromise that included all deities and, as such, was a continuation of the already existing imperial policy decreed by Galerius. Licinius and Constantine also referred to the worship of the supreme deity that all religious groups including Christians could acknowledge. What was changed? The Christian god was enrolled into the Roman pantheon. What did not change? Religion, the correct religious observance, remained the determinant of Roman citizenship and loyalty.

Religion as the fundamental factor of state life is apparent, for instance, in Lactantius's *Divinae institutiones*. What is modified when compared with the Roman tradition is *which* divinity should be worshipped for safeguarding the security of the empire. Whereas in the Roman tradition the well-being of the state was based on the relationship with the traditional Roman gods, for Lactantius the basis is the supreme deity. What is similar to the Roman tradition and even to the tetrarchic theology is Lactantius's agreement that a citizen's duty was primarily to worship god and to obey the law.³⁰

Religio and Superstitio Overturned

During the early empire, what was thought of as the correct religion (*religio*) was characterized as Roman. The opposite of the correct religion was often called superstition (*superstitio*). The concept of *superstitio* carried many different connotations, some of which were positive, but for the most part the term was derogatory and was employed to brand persons and groups as non-Roman and barbarian. Furthermore, *superstitio* was considered not only un-Roman, but also anti-Roman. *Superstitutiones* referred to religious activities that had arrived into Roman society from the outside and were often characterized as depraved, alien, spooky, and

in their meeting in Milan in February 313. In June 313, Licinius sent a letter to the eastern provincial governors in the names of both emperors. The proclamation is often mistakenly called the Edict of Milan, even though it is neither an edict nor was it issued at Milan. The most correct term would be *litterae Licinii*, Licinius's letter. For the declaration of 313, see Lee, *Pagans and Christians*, pp. 83–85; Peter Garnsey, 'Religious Toleration in Classical Antiquity', in *Persecution and Toleration*, ed. by W. J. Sheils (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), pp. 1–28 (p. 18); and Jochen Bleicken, *Constantin der Grosse und die Christen*, Historische Zeitschrift Beiheft, 15 (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1992), pp. 13–23.

³⁰ Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones*, 6. 8. 6. DePalma Digeser, *Making of a Christian Empire*, pp. 59–60; DePalma Digeser, 'Religion, Law and the Roman Polity', pp. 68–69.

dishonourable. In the writings of the Roman elite, superstition was from time to time associated with political threat and social subversion.³¹

Among many other religions, Christianity was labelled as a *superstitio*, and consequently un-Roman. After the Constantinian shift, over the course of the fourth century, there was a gradual shift in the hierarchy. The former civic religion was defined as *superstitio*, and consequently un-Roman. Christian writers portrayed Christianity as Roman and the former civic religion as un-Roman and even barbarian. This Christian interpretation little by little replaced the previous one. Ambrose of Milan, for instance, identifies what is Christian as being Roman and, correspondingly, what is non-Christian — pagan, polytheistic — with being barbarian. He stresses that pagan Rome had nothing else in common with barbarians but idolatry; both were ignorant of the one true god.³² He implies that now that Rome has become Christian, Rome no longer has anything in common with barbarians. Ambrose's remark was meant to embarrass the self-dignified distinguished Roman senators: they by no means wanted to be connected in any way with barbarians.

In the fourth century, from Theodosius I onwards, and in the fifth century, the imperial legislation applied the term *superstitio* to refer to those religious devotions that were labelled as alien, that is, those of pagans, Jews, and heretics.³³ Sacrifices that previously had functioned as the criterion of loyalty to the Roman state were designated as *superstitio*.³⁴ Thus, in course of the fourth and fifth centuries, the criteria for being a good Roman were changing. The issue of who was a good Roman was inverted. A good Roman was defined as a Christian, and not just any Christian, but a mainstream Christian. During the years 378–80 Gratian and

³¹ For example, Livius, *Ab urbe condita*, 10. 39. 2. For the discussion on *superstitio*, see Dale B. Martin, *Inventing Superstition: From Hippocratics to the Christians* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), pp. 130–35; Maurice Sachot, 'Religio — superstio', *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, 8 (1991), 355–94; and Denise Grodzynski, 'Superstitio', *Revue des études anciennes*, 76 (1974), 36–60.

³² Ambrosius, *Epistula*, 18. 7 (= 72, CSEL, 82.3). John H. W. G. Liebeschuetz (*Ambrose of Milan: Political Letters and Speeches*, trans., intro., and notes by Liebeschuetz with the assistance of Carole Hill (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005), p. 83) translates: 'That I did not know God is the one thing I once had in common with barbarians.'

³³ For example, *Codex Theodosianus*, 16. 5. 63 (in 425): 'Omnes haereses omnesque perfidias, omnia schismata superstitionesque gentiliū, omnes catholicae legi inimicos insectamur errores' (*Theodosiani libri XVI cum constitutionibus Sirmondianis et leges novellae ad Theodosianum pertinentes*, ed. by Theodor Mommsen and Paul M. Meyer (Berlin: Weidmann, 1954)).

³⁴ For example, in *Codex Theodosianus*, 16. 10. 12 (in 392) the shift is clearly announced.

Theodosius I identified mainstream Christianity as the religion of the empire. In 380 the emperors declared that they wanted to see all peoples adhering to the *religio* that was conveyed by Apostle Peter to the Romans and followed by Damasus, the bishop of Rome, and Peter, the bishop of Alexandria.³⁵

The abandonment of the Christian faith and its mainstream version was considered one of the gravest transgressions against the state and the emperor. This resembles the earlier Roman ideas of Roman citizenship: a Roman citizen, one belonging to Roman society, was also a member of the Roman religious community and took part in the civic religion.

While Christians had at times been seen as *hostes publici*, public enemies, during the early empire, from the late fourth century onwards non-Christians and Christians labelled as heretics were represented as the enemies of Roman rule. The only *religio*, the normative religious system, was now defined as being mainstream Christianity. Those who confessed and practised other devotions were regarded as falling outside of civilized — Christian and Roman — society.³⁶

Associating Barbarians and Pagans in Literature: Prudentius

In the fifth century, those outside the Christian *oikoumene* were depicted as non-Romans and barbarians. A binary opposition was constructed between the bestial, impious, pagan barbarian and the civilized, pious, Christian Roman.³⁷ For example, in *Contra Symmachum* the Christian poet Prudentius (348–c. 410) appeals to

³⁵ Particularly *Codex Theodosianus*, 16. 1. 2 (in 380): ‘cunctos populos, quos clementiae nostrae regit temperamentum, in tali volumus religione versari, quam divinum Petrum apostolum tradidisse Romanis religio usque ad nunc ab ipso insinuata declarat quamque pontificem Damasum sequi claret et Petrum Alexandriae episcopum virum apostolicae sanctitatis, hoc est, ut secundum apostolicam disciplinam evangelicamque doctrinam patris et filii et spiritus sancti unam deitatem sub parili maiestate et sub pia trinitate credamus’ (*Theodosiani libri XVI*, ed. by Mommsen and Meyer). See also *Codex Theodosianus*, 16. 5. 5 (in 379) and 16. 5. 4 (in 376/378/380).

³⁶ David Hunt, ‘Christianising the Roman Empire: The Evidence of the Code’, in *The Theodosian Code: Studies in the Imperial Law of Late Antiquity*, ed. by Jill Harries and Ian Wood (London: Duckworth, 1993), pp. 143–58 (p. 156), describes the process of segregation in legislation: ‘The drawing of the boundary around legitimate religion has almost ceased to be metaphorical: the laws envisage a Roman world the borders of which are coextensive with Christian orthodoxy, and which harbours no corner of refuge for the dissenting.’

³⁷ Cracco Ruggini, ‘Gli antichi e il diverso’, pp. 34–36, writes that this binary opposition between the bestial, impious barbarian and the civilized, pious Roman brings forth the last important aspect in the dialectic of tolerance and intolerance in Graeco-Roman antiquity.

those Romans who still worship numerous various gods (of whom he has presented a list in the preceding verses). He equates polytheism with barbarity. He exclaims, 'Let the pagan divinities remain in barbarian districts.'³⁸ Prudentius's rhetorical device is to label polytheistic rituals as marginal to Roman civilization by associating them with both barbarity and periphery with the expression *barbaricis pagis*.

In another passage in *Contra Symmachum*, Prudentius responds to Symmachus's defence of Roman religion and religious moderation in Symmachus's famous third *relatio*.³⁹ Symmachus had proclaimed that polytheists and Christians lived in the same world and shared the same stars and sky above them, implying that polytheists and Christians should live together and put up with one another. Prudentius replies that living is common to all but being worthy of merit is not.⁴⁰ Then he lists names of various nations — Dahan, Sarmatian, Vandal, Hun, Gaetulian, Garaman, Alamannian, Saxon, Galaulian (it is worth noting that he lists the most infamous peoples that were held as the most horrendous savages by the Romans) — and acknowledges that Romans and these barbarians, they all tread on the same earth, all have the same sky and same ocean bounding their world.⁴¹ This is another rhetorical move since he continues by associating barbarians and pagans with animals: humans and animals drink from the same fountains; the same dew gives corn to humans and grass to donkeys; a swine washes its dirt in the same rivers with humans; humans and dogs and even wild animals breathe the same air.⁴²

³⁸ Prudentius, *Contra Symmachum*, 1. 449: 'Sint haec barbaricis gentilia numina pagis' (*Prudentius in Two Volumes*, ed. with an English trans. by H. J. Thomson (1949–53; repr. London: Heinemann, 1969–79)). The word *pagus* could also be translated as a village and alludes to periphery, remoteness, and rural districts outside of urban civilization. It is also worth noting that the term *paganus* derived from the word *pagus* includes the association with periphery and the countryside — pagans are country hicks. See Kahlos's article 'The Shadow of the Shadow' in this volume.

³⁹ The Roman senator Q. Aurelius Symmachus (345–c. 402) wrote his third *relatio* as part of the famous dispute over the altar of Victoria in 384. For Symmachus's appeal, see Richard Klein, *Der Streit um den Victoria altar* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1972); the articles in *Colloque genevois sur Symmaque à l'occasion du mille six centième anniversaire du conflit de l'autel de la Victoire*, ed. by François Paschoud, G. Fry, and Y. Rutsche (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1986); and Kahlos, *Forbearance and Compulsion*, pp. 95–99. Cf. Mertaniemi's article 'From *Superstitio* to *Religio Christiana*' in this volume.

⁴⁰ Prudentius, *Contra Symmachum*, 2. 807: 'Vivere commune est, sed non commune mereri.'

⁴¹ Prudentius, *Contra Symmachum*, 2. 808–11: 'Denique Romanus, Dahan, Sarmata, Vandalus, Hunnus, | Gaetulus, Garamans, Alamannus, Saxo, Galaulas | una omnes gradiuntur humo, caelum omnibus unum est, | unus et oceanus, nostrum qui continet orbem.'

⁴² Prudentius, *Contra Symmachum*, 2. 812–15: 'Addo aliud: nostros potant animalia fontes; | ipso rore mihi seges est, quo gramen onagris, | spurca suis nostro amne natat, nostra intrat et ipsos

Furthermore, Prudentius even clarifies his linking of barbarians and pagans with animals, stating that what is Roman and what is barbarian are as distant (*distant*) from one another as the four-footed creature is disconnected (*abiuncta est*) from the two-footed or the dumb is from the speaking. Similarly, those who obey God's law with correct religious ritual (*rite*) are far away (*absunt*) from the filthy cults and their errors.⁴³ Consequently, Prudentius defines not only what being Roman is, but also what being human is. A human is Roman and Christian, and vice versa: the barbarian and pagan belong outside humanity, in the world of animals and beasts.⁴⁴

The Strategies of Exclusion in Legislation

In imperial legislation, religious dissidents were gradually deprived of their rights as Roman subjects and they were labelled as aliens within the empire. As Jean Gaudemet points out, the intention manifested recurrently by the imperial government was not only to protect the purity of dogma, but also to maintain the moral unity of the empire. The punishments decreed against heretics and apostates were similar to the traditional sanctions ordered against citizens fallen into disgrace, that is, the removal of the political rights of a Roman citizen. As Ralph W. Mathisen puts it, 'the possession of full citizenship came to be based on Christian confessional status'.⁴⁵

| aura canes animatque levi fera corpora flatu.' The choice of these animals is probably as deliberate as the selection of barbarian nations in verses 2. 808–11.

⁴³ Prudentius, *Contra Symmachum*, 2. 816–19: 'Sed tantum distant Romana et Barbara, quantum | quadrupes abiuncta est bipedi vel muta loquenti; | tantum etiam qui rite Dei praecepta sequuntur, | cultibus a stolidis et eorum erroribus absunt.'

⁴⁴ Prudentius (*Contra Symmachum*, 2. 839–40) also constructs a dichotomy of those who seek divinity from funerary urns and tombs, placating ghosts with blood, and those who worship the supreme god of heaven, offering justice as sacrifice and decorating the temple of the heart: 'Nempe magis non illud erunt, qui numen in urnis | quaerunt ac tumulis et larvas sanguine placant'; 2. 841–42: 'quod sunt qui summum caeli Dominum venerantur | iustitiamque litant et templum pectoris ornant'. For a different interpretation of the hierarchies in Prudentius, see Hans Armin Gärtner, 'Rome et les Barbares dans la poésie latine au temps d'Augustin: Rutilius Namatianus et Prudence', *Ktema*, 9 (1984), 113–21 (pp. 118–20).

⁴⁵ Jean Gaudemet, 'Les Romains et les autres', in *Da Roma alla Terza Roma*, II: *La nozione di Romano tra cittadinanza e universalità* (Naples: Edizioni scientifiche italiane, 1984), pp. 7–37 (pp. 17–18); Ralph W. Mathisen, 'Peregrini, Barbari, and Cives Romani: Concepts of Citizenship and the Legal Identity of Barbarians in the Later Roman Empire', *American Historical Review*, 111 (2006), 1–48 (p. 14).

From Theodosius I onwards, it was implied that as heretics or apostates were aliens to the correct religion, they must also be aliens to the Roman Empire. Heresy in particular was treated as treasonable. For example, Ambrose of Milan considered heresy a double treason — not only against the Church but also against the empire.⁴⁶

In imperial legislation, heretics and apostates were banished outside late Roman society. In a number of decrees, heretics and apostates were deprived of their rights such as the competence to act as a witness, to make a testament, and to receive inheritance.⁴⁷ For example, in 383 it was decreed that those Christians who deserted Christianity for 'the sacrileges of temples or Jewish rites or the filth of Manichaeans' lost their competence as witnesses.⁴⁸ Moreover, religious dissidents were divested of their rights to make economic transactions such as donating, buying, selling, and making contracts.⁴⁹ They were gradually dispossessed of the right to serve in administrative and military offices.⁵⁰ For example, a ruling from 416

⁴⁶ Ambrosius, *De fide*, 2. 16. 139. Michel Meslin, 'Nationalisme, état et religions à la fin du IV^e siècle', *Archives de sociologie des religions*, 18 (1964), 3–20 (pp. 13–14). For the circumstances concerning Ambrose's *De fide*, see Neil McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 102–05. In his ecclesiastical history (11. 13), Rufinus drew a connection between Emperor Valens's (supposed) Arianism and his defeat at the hands of the Goths at Adrianople in 378.

⁴⁷ For example, in a ruling against apostates, all three of these rights are removed (*Codex Theodosianus*, 16. 7. 4pr. in 391). Making a testament: 16. 5. 7 (in 381), 16. 5. 18 (in 389) against Manichaeans; 16. 5. 17 (in 389) against Eunomians etc.; 16. 7. 1 against apostates. Receiving inheritance: 16. 5. 7 (in 381), 16. 5. 17 (in 389). Legislation against apostates: 16. 7. 2 (in 383); 16. 7. 3 (in 383); 16. 7. 6 (in 396); 16. 7. 7 (in 426). Karl Leo Noethlichs, 'Heidenverfolgung', in *RAC*, XIII (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1986), pp. 1149–90 (pp. 1163–64), and M. R. Salzman, 'The Evidence for the Conversion of the Roman Empire to Christianity in Book 16 of the Theodosian Code', *Historia*, 42 (1993), 362–78 (pp. 373–77).

⁴⁸ *Codex Theodosianus*, 16. 7. 3 (in 383): 'Christianorum ad aras et templa migrantium negata testandi licentia vindicamus admissum. Eorum quoque flagitia puniantur, qui christianae religionis et nominis dignitate neglecta, iudaicis semet polluere contagiis. Eos vero, qui Manichaeorum nefanda secreta et scelerosos aliquando sectari maluerunt secessus, ea iugiter atque perpetuo poena comitetur' (*Theodosiani libri XVI*, ed. by Mommsen and Meyer). For the decree, see Noethlichs, 'Heidenverfolgung', p. 1159.

⁴⁹ *Codex Theodosianus*, 16. 5. 40 against Manichaeans and Priscillianists; 16. 5. 54 pr. against Donatists.

⁵⁰ For example, *Codex Theodosianus*, 16. 5. 25 (395); 16. 5. 29 (in 395); 16. 5. 42 (in 408) removing *inimici catholicae sectae* from the imperial court; 16. 5. 41 (in 408) forbidding 'heretics' to serve at the western court; 16. 5. 48 (in 410); *Constitutiones Sirmondianae*, 6 (in 425) prohibiting pagans and Jews to serve in any administrative office or in *militia*. *Codex Theodosianus*, 16. 7. 2

forbade pagans to enter military or administrative offices or to be nominated as judges.⁵¹

In a number of rulings it was pronounced that religious dissidents were deprived of their rights to live according to Roman law (*iure Romano*) and they would live from then on outside of Roman law (*absque iure Romano*).⁵² Moreover, it was announced that those who abandoned Christianity had to be segregated from the community of all (*a consortio omnium segregati sint*).⁵³ Furthermore, in 391 it was decreed that a noble person who deviated from Christianity and lapsed into pagan sacrifices should lose his status and be eternally disgraced and be counted not even among the lowest of the low. In the ruling it was declared:

For what could these have in common with humans — these who in their gruesome and beastly minds, hating the respect of the community, withdraw from the company of humans?⁵⁴

By characterizing those deviating from Christianity as having gruesome and beastly minds, the legislators banished them beyond the human community. They were depicted as hating the respect of human society; this portrayal resembles the label of both the Jews and Christians as hating the human race.⁵⁵ There was also a tendency to alienate religious dissidents from the urban centres to the periphery. In

(in 383); 16. 7. 3 (in 383); 16. 7. 6 (in 396/98); 16. 7. 7 (in 426) against apostates. *Codex Theodosianus*, 16. 5. 25 (in 395) excluded heretics from the offices of the imperial administration. For the status of heretics, see Caroline Humfress, 'Citizens and Heretics: Late Roman Lawyers on Christian Heresy', in *Heresy and Identity in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Eduard Iricinschi and Holger M. Zellentin (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), pp. 128–42 (pp. 132–37), and Noethlichs, 'Heidenverfolgungen', pp. 1165, 1172, 1175.

⁵¹ *Codex Theodosianus*, 16. 10. 21 (in 416): 'qui profano pagani ritus errore seu crimine polluantur, hoc est gentiles, nec ad militiam admittantur nec administratoris vel iudicis honore decorentur'.

⁵² *Codex Theodosianus*, 16. 5. 7pr against Manichaeans (in 381): 'quoniam isdem sub perpetua inustae infamiae nota testandi ac vivendi iure Romano omnem protinus eripimus facultatem neque eos aut relinquendae aut capiendae alicuius hereditatis habere sinimus potestatem'; 16. 7. 2 (in 383): 'omnem [...] testamenti contendit interdicimus potestatem, ut sint absque iure Romano'.

⁵³ *Codex Theodosianus*, 16. 7. 4 (in 391).

⁵⁴ *Codex Theodosianus*, 16. 7. 5 (in 391): 'Si quis splendor collatus est in eos vel ingenitus dignitatis, qui fide devii et mente caecati sacrosanctae religionis cultu et reverentia descivissent ac se sacrificiis mancipassent, pereat, ut de loco suo statuque deiecti perpetua urantur infamia ac ne in extrema quidem vulgi ignobilis parte numerentur. Quid enim his cum hominibus potest esse commune, qui infandis et feralibus mentibus gratiam communionis exosi ab hominibus recesserunt?'

⁵⁵ For example, Tacitus, *Historiae*, 5. 5 on Jews; Tacitus, *Annales*, 15. 44 on Christians.

415 it was decreed that pagan priests (*sacerdotes*) in Africa were to leave great cities and return to their home regions.⁵⁶ In 425 it was announced that Manicheans, all heretics, schismatics, astrologers, and any other 'sect inimical to Catholics' had to leave the cities so that the contaminating presence of these iniquitous people could not pollute good Christians.⁵⁷

It seems that the enforcement of harsh imperial legislation was not particularly efficient. The repeated decrees and constant complaints of the emperors demonstrate the failure of putting many of the rulings into practice.⁵⁸ However, Christian emperors apparently wanted or needed to make public moral declarations in order to satisfy ecclesiastical hard-liners.⁵⁹ The practice of every-day life was another issue.

Conclusion: Shared Values

The most significant marker of loyal membership in Roman society was participation in the religious rituals of the community. The idea that being a good Roman was delineated in terms of religion had different implications in the third and fourth centuries. The emperors Caracalla, Decius, Valerian, and Diocletian are known to have connected Romanness with participation in the sacrificial rituals.

⁵⁶ *Codex Theodosianus*, 16. 10. 20 (in 415).

⁵⁷ *Constitutiones Sirmondianae*, 6 (in 425): 'Sane quia religiosos populos nullis decet superstitionibus depravari, Manichaeos omnesque haereticos vel schismaticos sive mathematicos omnemque sectam catholicis inimicam ab ipso aspectu urbium diversarum exterminari debere praecipimus, ut nec praesentiae quidem criminorum contagione foedentur' (*Theodosiani libri XVI*, ed. by Mommsen and Meyer).

⁵⁸ The reinforcement of legislation depended on the efficacy of the local administration and the sympathies of authorities and the political circumstances of each region. For how legislation was reinforced, see Garth Fowden, 'Polytheist Religion and Philosophy', in *Cambridge Ancient History*, XIII: *The Late Empire, A.D. 337–425*, ed. by Averil Cameron and Peter Garnsey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 538–60 (p. 540); Hunt, 'Christianising', pp. 143–44; M. R. Salzman, 'Superstitio in the Codex Theodosianus and the Persecution of Pagans', *Vigiliae Christianae*, 41 (1987), 172–88; and Scott Bradbury, 'Constantine and the Problem of Anti-Pagan Legislation in the Fourth Century', *CPh*, 89 (1994), 120–39 (p. 133).

⁵⁹ Paul Veyne, 'Clientèle et corruption au service de l'état: la vénalité des offices dans le bas-empire romain', *Annales*, 36 (1981), 339–60 (p. 355, n. 26) writes of the necessity of making a public declaration of 'la bonne conduite' or 'un idéal moral': 'mais pour proclamer à la face du ciel quelle est la bonne conduite, ou un idéal moral'. Bradbury, 'Constantine', pp. 134–37, speaks of the laws as moral proclamations that restore discipline to the social order through exhortation, condemnation, and threat.

In the Christian empire, being Roman was redefined as being Christian and, moreover, the right kind of Christian. Others, 'pagans' and 'heretics', were excluded from Roman civilization. Thus, in the different phases of the Roman Empire, in spite of all their many differences, pagans and Christians alike shared the mental framework within which the membership in the community and even in humanity was bound to the right kind of religion.

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